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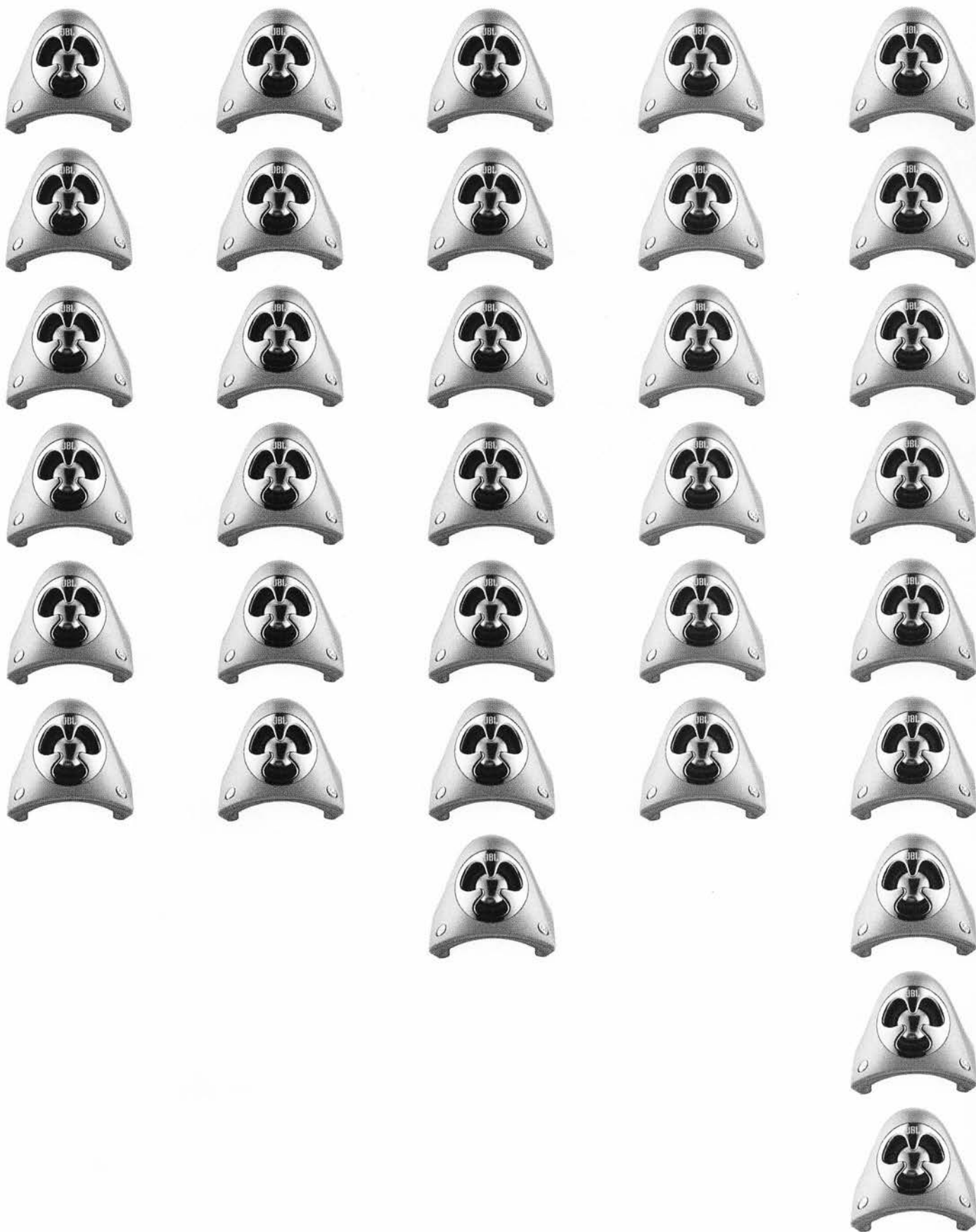
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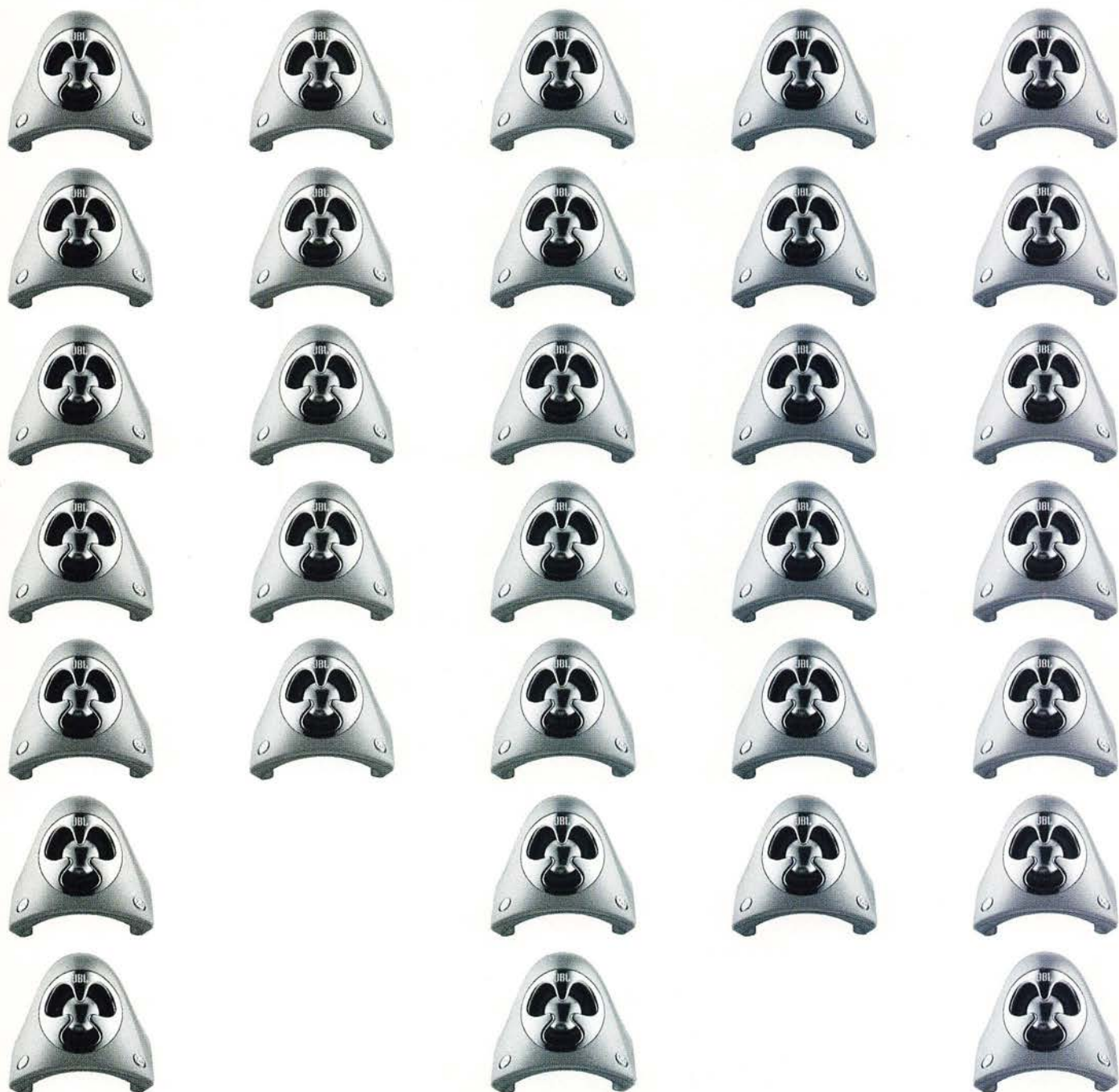
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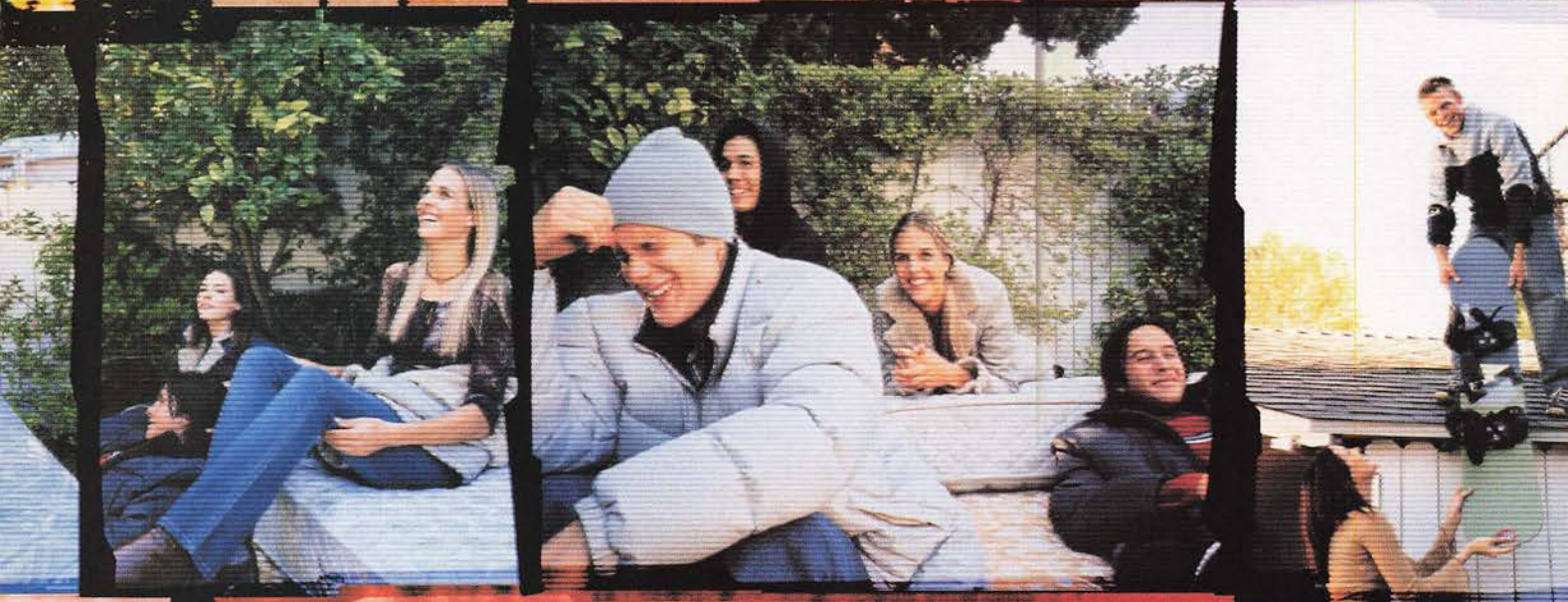


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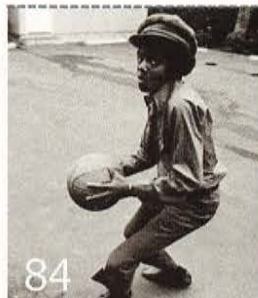
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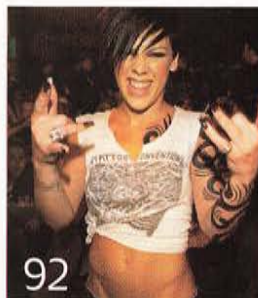
BLENDER

FEATURES

- 68 DISTURBED**
Shaved-headed, steel-tusked David Draiman growls scary lyrics and cries when he discusses his family. Does he ever have fun? After gigs he does — "and I'm not talking about my left hand."
- 76 33 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT TORI AMOS**
She got invited to a Ku Klux Klan cook-out. Her preacher dad was relieved to learn she'd had "an affair with Jesus and the devil." Plus 31 more weird truths.
- 82 THE DONNAS MUST SPEND BLENDER'S \$848!**
So they race around San Francisco, snapping up lip gloss and video games and talking about — um, human excrement, actually. . . .
- 84 IS MICHAEL JACKSON BROKE?**
Once, he earned \$66 million on *Thriller*. Today, his probable debts total somewhere around \$200 million. How does someone blow so much cash so fast?
- 92 THE BEST SONGS TO LIVE YOUR LIFE TO**
Need the perfect tune for that karaoke session? That funeral? That lap dance? We've got you covered, bro.
- 98 N.E.R.D.**
The rock-rap geniuses slay the ladies with résumés as long as their disco-lighted, monogrammed-carpeted bus. Dislikes: following the rules. Likes: Shakira. "Mmm . . . that ass!"
- 102 THE MOST DISASTROUS ALBUMS OF ALL TIME!**
Hey, let's do our album on crack! Or, no, wait — we could sing it entirely in Latin! Or maybe we could turn Garth Brooks into a Goth punk! *Great idea!*
- 110 LEANN RIMES**
Bye, country music! Bye, teens! After years spent suing her dad and fighting an onerous 28-album contract, Ms. Rimes is an L.A. woman now, full of forgiveness — even for Daddy!



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92



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“I really felt like I was going insane.” LEANN RIMES, p.110

ON THE COVER >>>>



PHOTOGRAPHY FRANK OCKENFELS 3

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“I want to lead people toward hope through the healing power of metal.”

DISTURBED'S DAVID DRAIMAN, p68



REGULARS

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Is James Brown a transsexual? Who was Axl Rose's "November Rain" about? Who was the real Spinal Tap? And more.

58 THE GREATEST SONGS EVER!

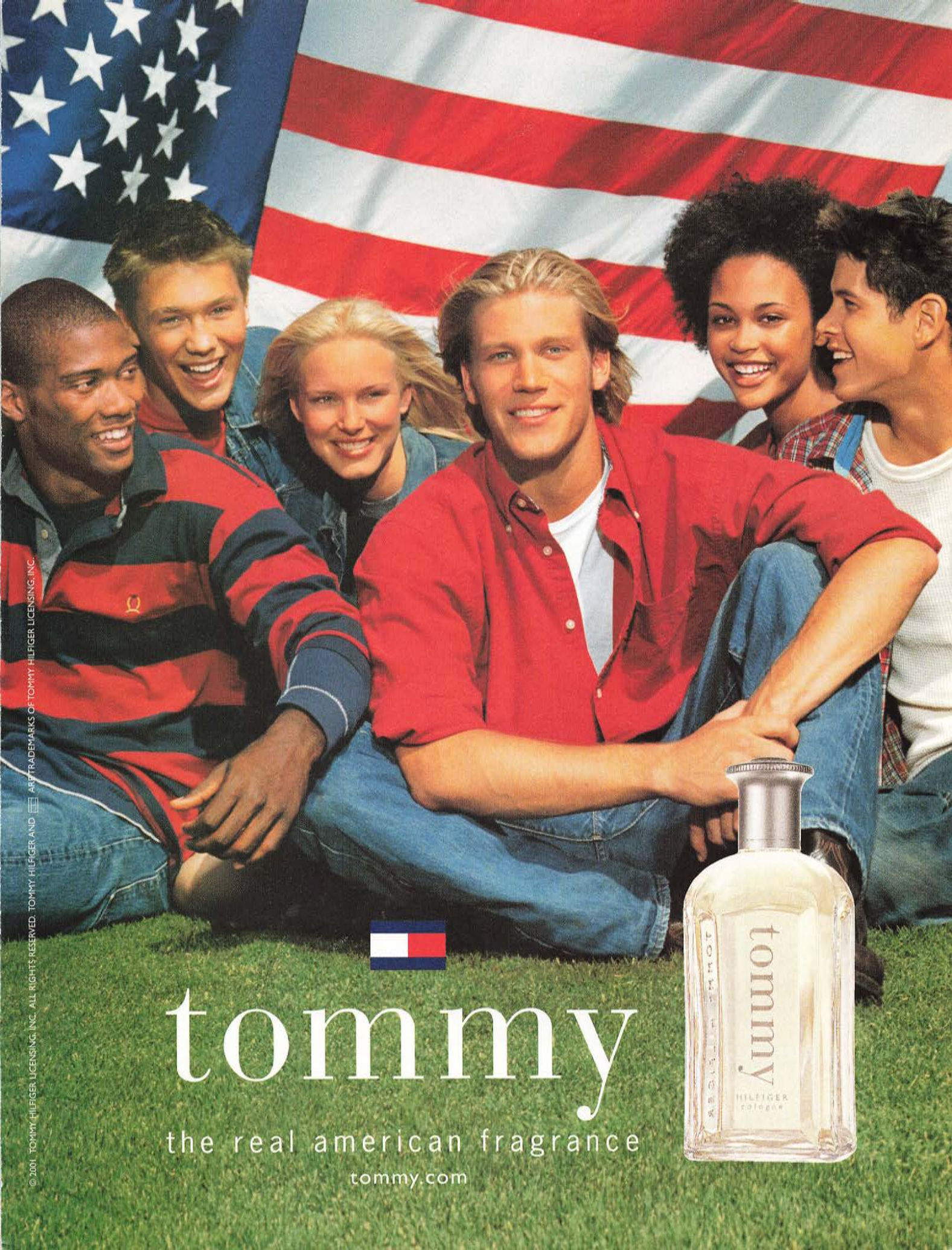
Jay-Z hears a bouncy show tune and writes "Hard Knock Life."

60 DEAR SUPERSTAR

Jon Bon Jovi on his Central Park ice-skating arrest, his fistfight with Sebastian Bach and his star turn on the *Star Wars Christmas Album*. "A \$186 check — I thought that was just the shit!"

176 WHO DOES NICK CARTER THINK HE IS?

He's a scuba-license packin', spaceship-drawin', tattoo-collectin' Backstreet Boy who thinks he might like to be Janis Joplin. And he pays top dollar for a quart of milk! Us too, Janis...



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I have a rug on my back and chest. Shag carpet. JON BON JOVI, p60





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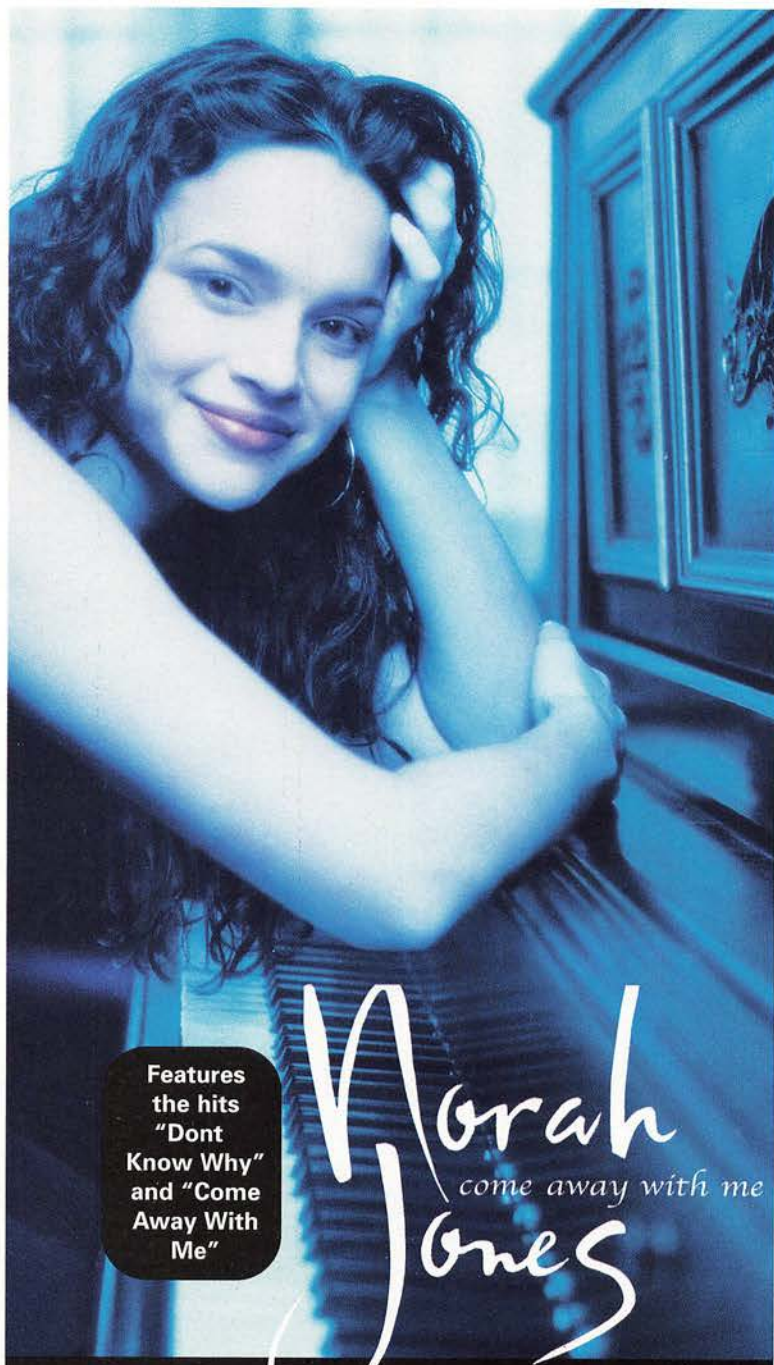
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Features
the hits
"Don't
Know Why"
and "Come
Away With
Me"

Norah *come away with me* Jones

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"Music that works like a time machine, transporting listeners to an era long before anyone had ever thought of SUVs or smart bombs, when people slow danced and electricity was something that sparkled between lovers."

— Interview

In a time when soulless, midriff-baring automatons are the norm, vocalist/ pianist Norah Jones has defied convention to become the most refreshing music story of the year.

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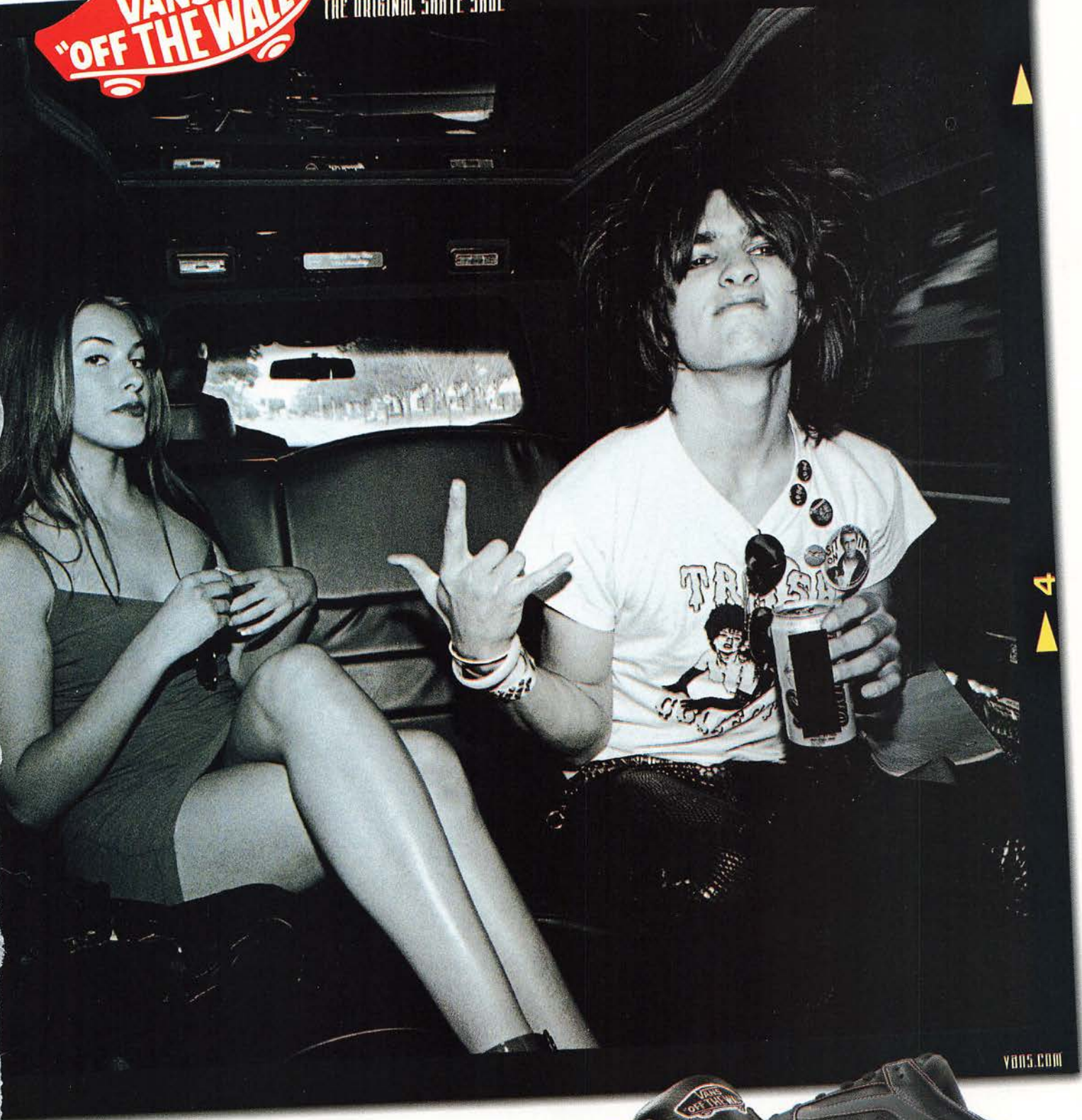


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THE **TNT** BY TONY TRUJILLO



GETTING THE PARTY STARTED

» OH, THE CRAZY business we call "show." Such wonderful highs! Such terrible lows! One minute you're sipping champagne with Gwen Stefani (right) and a host of well-heeled pop stars — the next, you're sipping champagne with a gaggle of well-appointed movie stars. Well, that's what it's like for me, anyway.

My latest outbreak of boozy bonhomie was in honor of the *Blender* MTV Video Music Awards after-party. Held with our most excellent friends at Island Def Jam Records and Pony, it was a night of a thousand stars. (You should have seen the line at the bar!) Everyone who is/was/will be anyone was there. Charming couple Enrique Iglesias and Anna Kournikova (1), Christina Aguilera (2), David Lee Roth (3), Johnny Knoxville (4), Ashanti (5), Ja Rule, 'N Sync, the Strokes — the list snakes off into the distance — and every last one of them a very good friend of mine (and when I say "very good friend," I mean "person I met briefly"). Read all about it on page 42.

But this party is merely the olive in this month's martini. We also plunge headfirst into the most disastrous CDs ever. Ego, crack addiction, booze binges, nervous breakdowns, rock operas in Latin... yes, the *Blender* office can be an ugly place, especially during tricky projects like that.

But once we calmed down a bit, we managed to share a couple of laughs with David Draiman of Disturbed, the world's most serious metal band. We learned lots of surprising things about Tori Amos, ran our metaphorical fingers through Jon Bon Jovi's very real chest hair and spent some quality time with LeAnn Rimes, Bruce Springsteen, Guns N' Roses and the Donnas. And now, so can you —

Oh, excuse me — a very good friend (6) has just walked in, and I *must* say hello. Oh, Kirsten! Kirsten, darling! Now, what's this nonsense about a restraining order?...

ANDY PEMBERTON
EDITOR IN CHIEF



6

You should have seen the line at the bar!



Gwen Stefani sports a pair of leather curtains at *Blender*'s VMA party on August 29.



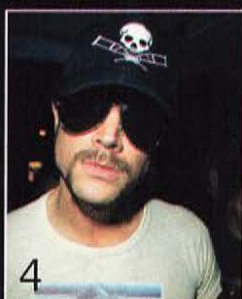
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EMINEM KIM BASINGER BRITTANY MURPHY MEKHI PHIFER

8 Mile

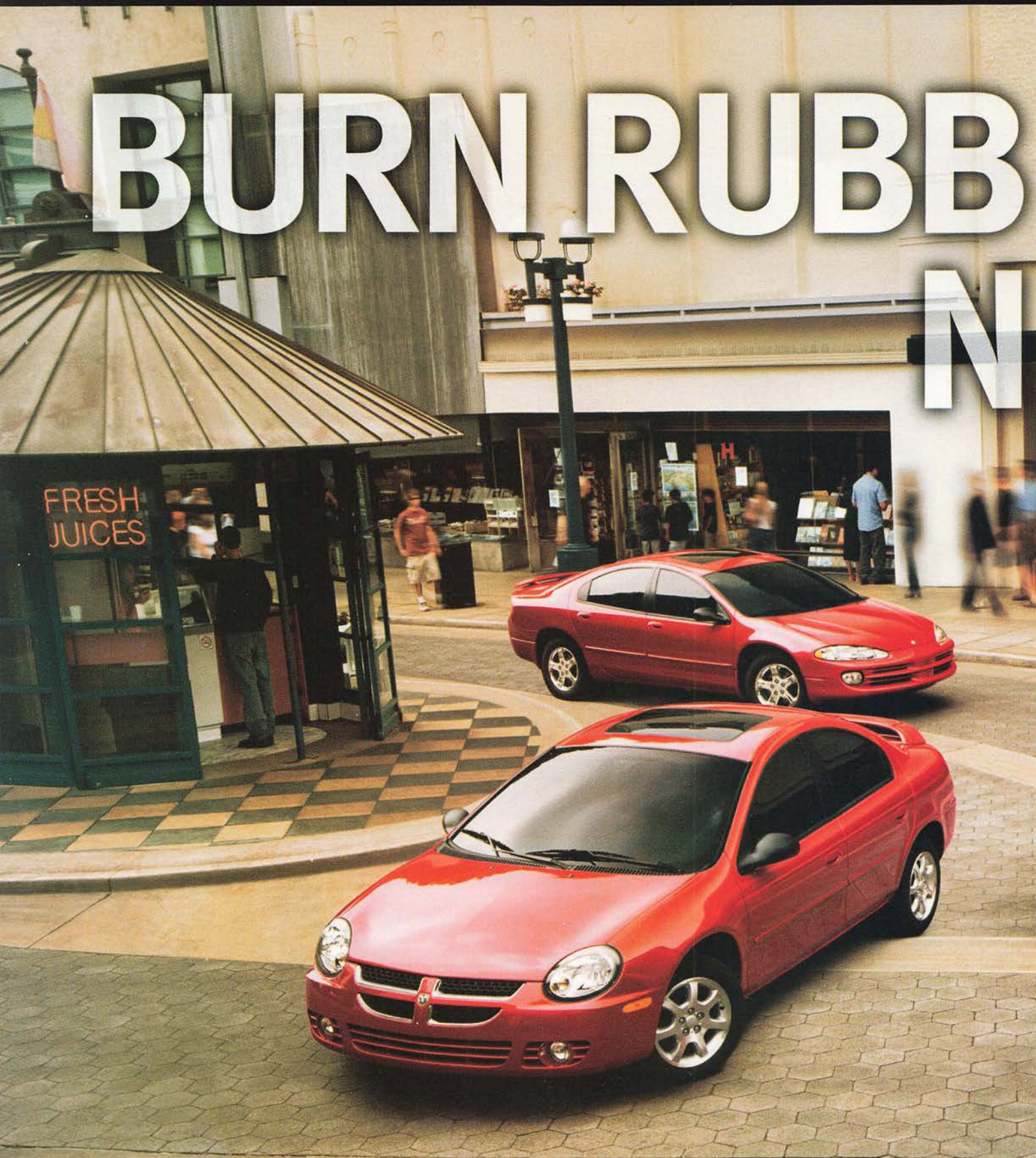
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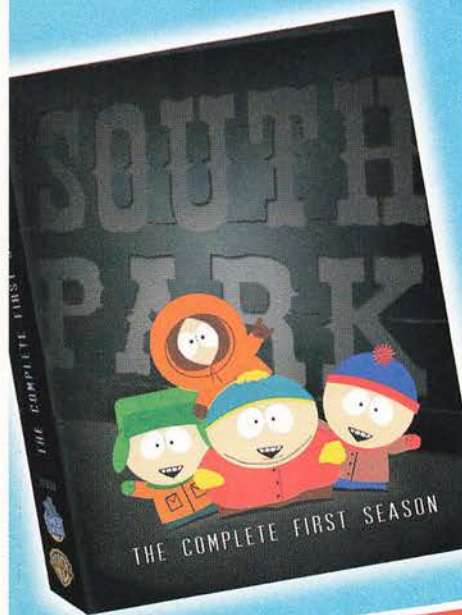


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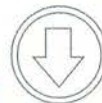


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You've Got Mail!



WE WANT YOU TO SHARE...



SPINE MESSAGE REVEALED!

The lyric on the spine of your October issue ("Goodnight Irene, goodnight Irene/I'll see you in my dreams") is tough to identify. The conventional wisdom is that "Goodnight Irene" is by Huddie "Leadbelly" Ledbetter, though I think he shared the copyright with John and Alan Lomax. Some believe it's a variation of a Woody Guthrie song, and others think it's by Gordon Jenkins and the Weavers. And Johnny Cash sang a stunning version of it in the early '70s.

JENNIFER MOORE, HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

Well done, Jennifer. We included it as a tribute to blues archivist Alan Lomax, who passed away on July 19.

MY BRAIN HURTS

The upside-down lyric "Bring your own lampshade/Somewhere there's a party" on the last page of your October issue is taken from "Swingin' Party," by the Replacements. But why did we use this lyric? Are you saying it's time to party? Is October the month of fun? Are you throwing a party? When and where? What's going on? My brain hurts.

ADAM LOUIS, AUSTIN, TEXAS

Time to switch to decaf, Adam.

★ Congratulations to the winner of *Blender's* August crossword puzzle, who walks away with a shiny new Microsoft Xbox game system: Taro Naruse of Brooklyn, New York. *Oh, yeah!*

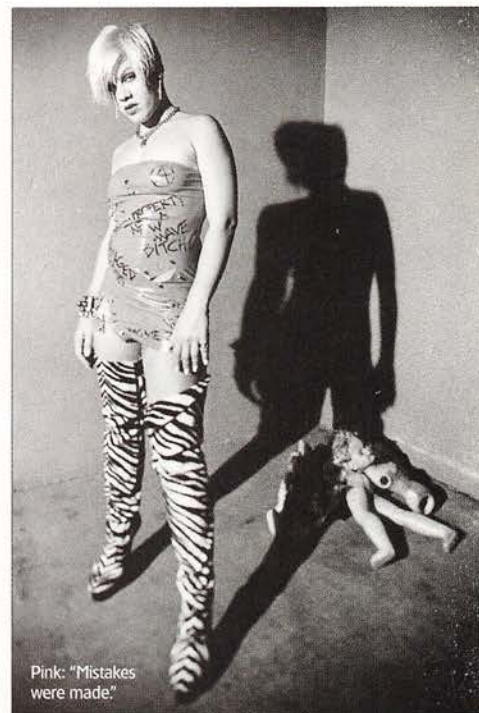
IS PINK A TURTLE?

Pink says she needs to be "fed and petted and washed and looked after" ["A Darker Shade of Pink," October]. What is she — a pop star or a turtle?

DANA POLLEN, LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

DOES STAPP HATE EMINEM?

I was interested to read that Creed's Scott Stapp wouldn't let his young son



Pink: "Mistakes were made."

listen to Eminem's new album because of "the way he expresses himself" [Dear Superstar, October]. Coincidentally, I wouldn't let my son buy the last Creed album. In my case, though, it's because I think they suck.

GARY SALKIN, SEATTLE

I HAVE SLEPT WITH WOMEN!

After reading Bill Wyman's assessment of how many women each Rolling Stone has slept with ["Rock's Greatest Shaggers!," August], it didn't surprise me that *my* conquests topped those of Charlie Watts. But the fact that I've also beaten Mick Jagger was truly this year's milestone. As soon as I pass Gene Simmons, I'll let you know.

GARY KEUMA, OZARK, MISSOURI

Great. See you in 2791!

BLENDER IN THE BATHROOM

I need some advice. I always keep the newest *Blender* in my bathroom. Unfortunately, I can't put *Blender* down once I get into it. By the time I notice how long I've been on the throne, an hour is gone and I haven't wiped. (That's when I have to skip wiping altogether, and jump in the shower.) Where else can I leave you? I thought about the car, but I suspect my insurance company would slap me.

DAVE MCCONNELL, ORLANDO, FLORIDA

Dave, you may be interested to learn →

BACK IT UP! >>



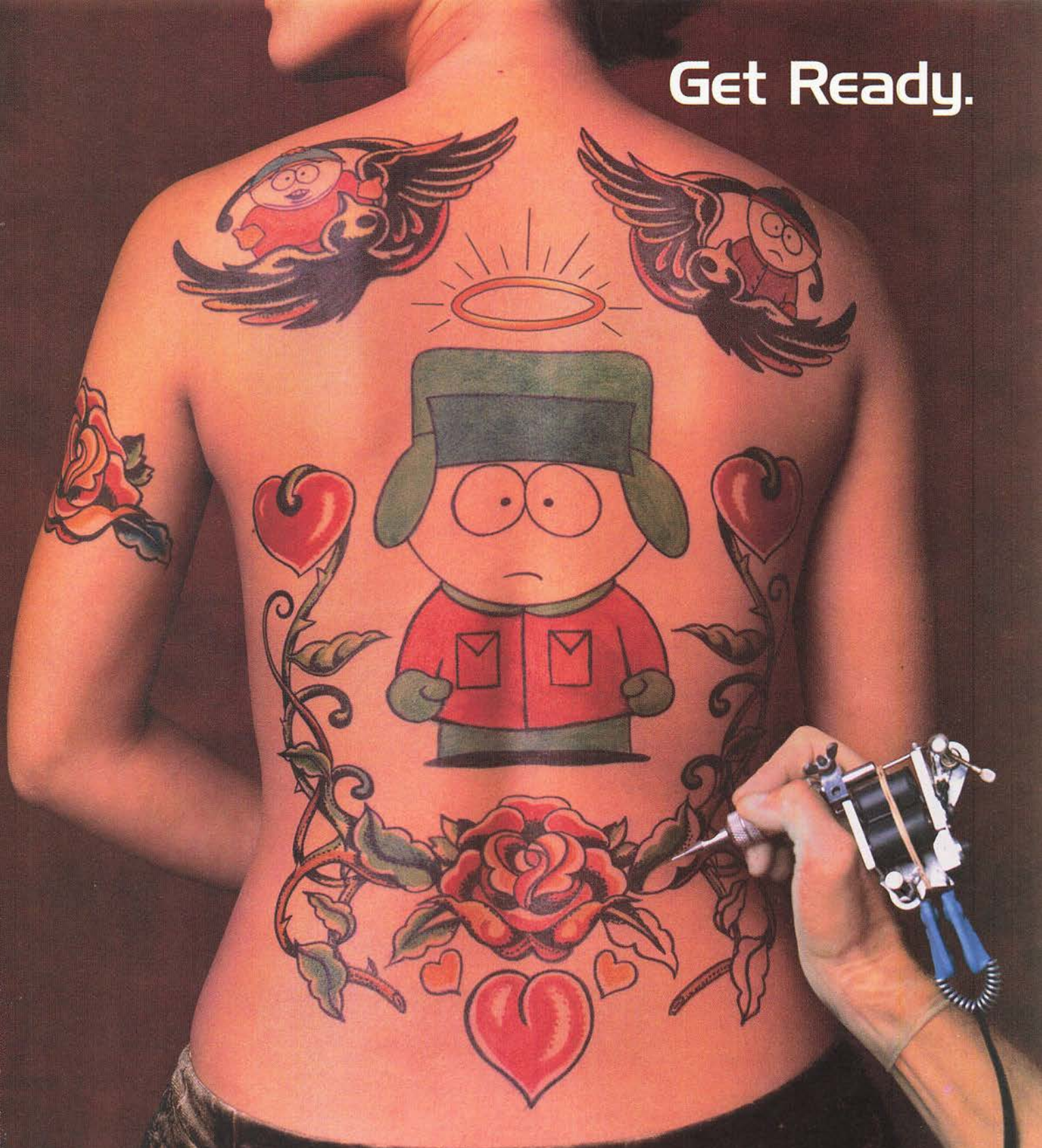
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Oh, now we get it: "Lonely Hearts Club Band." Cute, J. Love.



that we turned our crack team of *Blender* scientists loose, and they have assessed the "too much information" quotient of your letter to be 87 percent, a new record.

JENNIFER LOVE HEWITT'S ASSETS

So Jennifer Love Hewitt says that she likes the music of Bonnie Raitt and Al Green ["The Other J.Lo," October], huh? Well, that's another two things she has in her favor.

GREG MANNING, ASTORIA, NEW YORK

GN'R ARE PATHETIC!

What a sad, pathetic display of ego and paranoia at the end of the MTV Video Music Awards on August 29. The tumor that calls itself Guns N' Roses performed a disturbing and confusing set that was difficult to watch and even harder to listen to. Sitting in the studio for 10 years has evidently not been good for Axl Rose. And what's with that band of losers behind him? A guy with a Kentucky Fried Chicken bucket on his head and a hockey mask on? It's been obvious to everyone for a long time that Axl has completely lost it. He's a delusional egomaniac who thinks everyone is out to get him, including his ex-bandmates, and he's taken this once beautiful, vibrant musical force and turned it into a musical farce. The GN'R of old will always be one of my favorite bands, and one of the greatest of all time, but I won't be onboard for this train wreck.

JOE, PHILADELPHIA

Dude, if you didn't like it, why don't you just say so?

Hands in the air if you also miss Slash!

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Courtney Bouchard and Suge Knight



Joe Lyons and the White Stripes



★ **HAPPY THANKSGIVING, Superfaniacs!** It's time for one of the biggest family events in America. More important, it's time to take that camera you're using for the group shot with Aunt Betty and go get a kick-ass picture of you with a music star. You could win a dazzling MP3 player similar to the one pictured at left! Please send your photograph and contact information to *Blender* Superfan, 1040 Avenue of the Americas, 22nd floor, New York, New York 10018. Yes!

BLENDER IS WONDERFUL

Even though *Blender* had half the pages missing when I first found it in my one of my children's rooms, it was still the best magazine I've seen in years. My 19-year-old son and my daughters, 12 and 14, don't stop fighting over it until the next one arrives. I'm going to subscribe so I can have my own copy.

ROSE FULLER, ANTWERP, NEW YORK

CHEVY CHASE WAS IN STEELY DAN?

I was not surprised to learn that Chevy Chase had recently declined an offer to rejoin Steely Dan [Ask *Blender*, October]. After all, who'd want to play with one of the greatest bands in the world when he could instead be making *Cops and Robbers* and *Vegas Vacation*?

ALAN STANWYK, KETCHUM, IDAHO

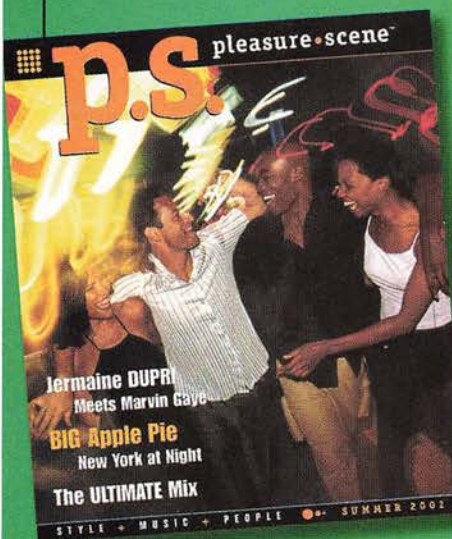
Point taken. But *Snow Day* rules! →

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EMINEM TOUCHED ME!

I had never listened carefully to Eminem's lyrics, but after reading "The Super Anti Hero" [August], my perspective changed. His story touched me. If it hadn't been for the birth of his daughter, Hailie, he wouldn't have made it this far. "If she had never been born, I would have nothing around me to make me truly happy": That's the most positive thing Eminem's ever said about anyone.

TRACY KOZYRA, MYRTLE BEACH, SOUTH CAROLINA

THE HIVES? TERRIBLE!

I just saw the Hives on *The Late Show With David Letterman*, and it was the worst live performance I've ever seen. Pelle Almqvist was singing like his mouth was full of Novocaine and cotton balls. It's sad, really. The Hives had such great potential. Say it ain't so, *Blender*!

T.J. O'BRIEN, PEMBROKE, MASSACHUSETTS

It ain't so, T.J. It ain't so. If only everything was so easy.

'BYE, THEN, JOHN ENTWISTLE

I wrote Pete Townshend a letter 18 years ago. The reply he sent me is possibly my most prized possession. The Who are everything to me, and it was great of you to put a lyric from



Eminem "greeted" Moby.

"Success Story" on the same page as your John Entwistle obituary [September] — and, of course, a bit of "Boris the Spider" on the spine. Where has Entwistle gone? To make thunder with Keith Moon, of course. Thanks again.

MATTHEW HANHAUSER
SUMMERVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

I LIKE BECK

Your Beck interview ["The Heartbreak Kid," October] was insightful. I've always felt a kinship for Beck; his moods reflect mine so well. "Devils Haircut" was the perfect song to bounce to when I was in ninth grade, but now, in college, I see Beck's right again, when he sings about how people you love don't always make you feel right.

KELLY KOH, BOSTON

NICE ASS WIPER!

Congrats to Adrian Deevoy for "I Was a Rap Star's Ass Wiper!" [October], his hilarious account of tending to Ludacris's needs. Next issue, why not "I Was Tommy Lee's Home-Video Maker" or "I Was Keith Richards's Drug Dealer" or "I Was R. Kelly's..." [suggestion edited out at our lawyers' recommendation].

EDWIN RAMES, BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

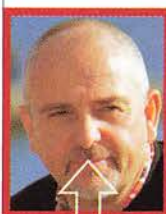
BEING BALD MEN TOGETHER

As a Peter Gabriel fan, I enjoyed your positive review of his new album [New Releases, "Gabriel's Horn," October]. But why did you use a photo of Moby's great-grandfather to accompany it?

EDDIE WILLIAMS, NEW ROCHELLE, NEW YORK



The Hives' Howlin' Pelle Almqvist, between howls



Peter Gabriel, Moby: Related? No.



Uh-oh! *Blender's* run out of chicken. Ludacris is gonna freak!



Holiday pleasure!



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BLENDER

TO ALL OUR FRIENDS! >>

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OF BLENDER**

**ON SALE
NOV. 26**

**BLENDER'S
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STARRING >>

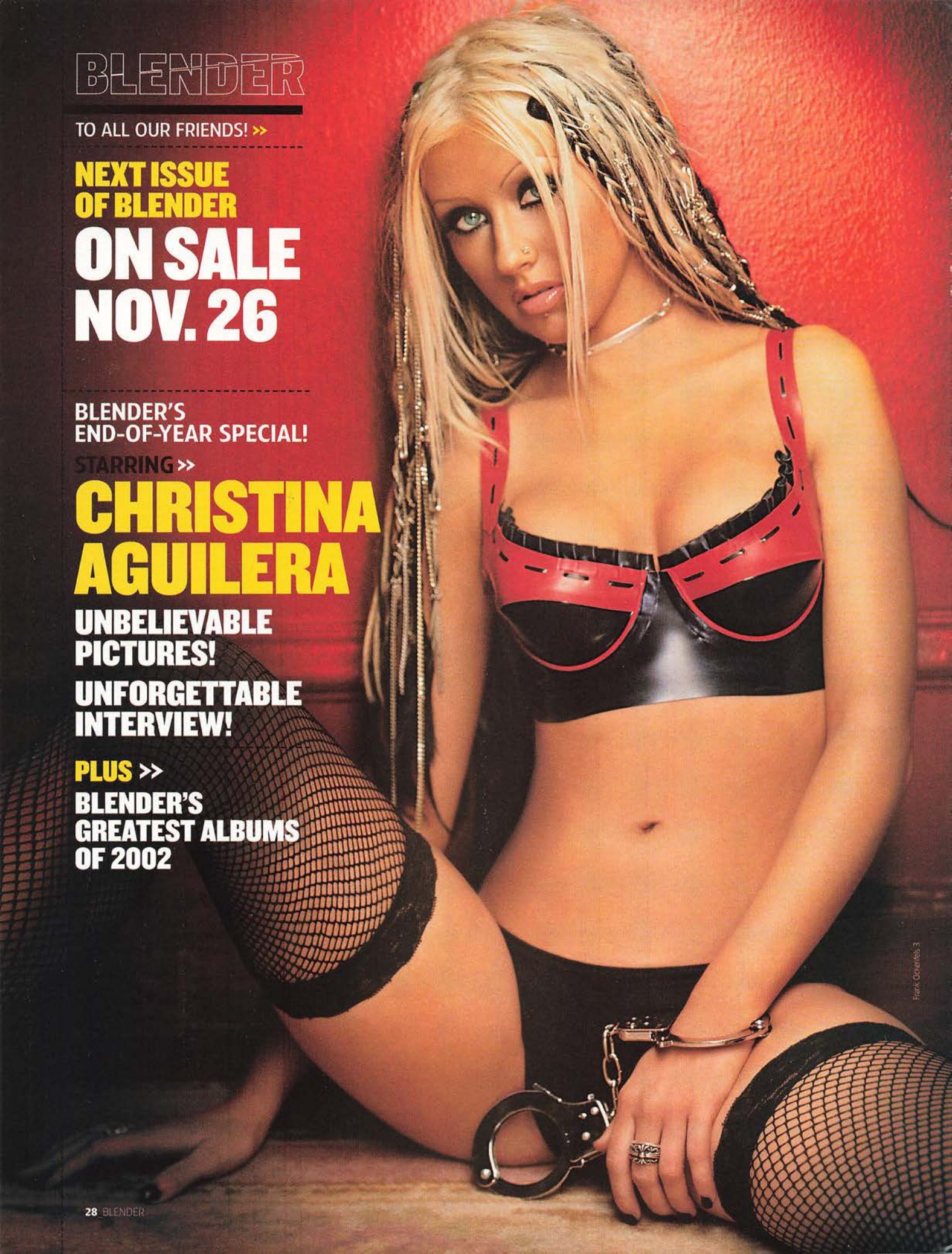
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★ CHRISTINA AGUILERA ★ NELLY ★ AXL ROSE ★ SCRAPPY DOO ➤➤



Tupac Shakur (left) and Marion "Suge" Knight, moments before Shakur was shot, September 7, 1996

"It's Gonna Be More Bloodshed"

Could an article blaming Biggie for Tupac's murder spark a gang war?

★ HIP-HOP ARTISTS are up in arms over a recent *Los Angeles Times* article that blames Biggie Smalls for Tupac Shakur's 1996 murder and fear the story will reignite a bloody East Coast–West Coast gang war.

"If people believe this, it's gonna be more bloodshed," warned Money B of Digital Underground, the Bay Area group that gave Shakur his start. "And the people getting hurt are black people — gang members and rappers."

"It could escalate to something," said Lil' Cease of Junior M.A.F.I.A., one of Smalls's closest confidants. "People think it's a game, but when it's really on, it's a serious situation."

Def Jam and Phat Farm founder Russell Simmons immediately challenged the accuracy of the article, which appeared in the *Times* on September 6 and 7, and said he believes it could rekindle the battle. Simmons also blames the media for fanning the flames of the rap rivalry.

"The media was the greatest instigator of what they named and promoted as the East–West Coast war," Simmons told *Blender*. "They made whole communities angry at each other. Lives were lost because of their characterization of an argument between two people."

Nick Broomfield, the controversial lo-fi documentary filmmaker behind the recent *Biggie & Tupac*, agrees. "A lot of people have used the 'two sides' idea to create frictions in the hip-hop community," he said.

The 6,600-word article claimed Smalls was in Las Vegas on September 7, 1996, the same night Shakur was shot there. After being approached by

members of the Los Angeles Southside Crips gang, Smalls allegedly agreed to pay them \$1 million if they killed Shakur, who was in town that evening to watch a boxing match.

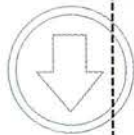


Russell Simmons fears new bicoastal gang wars.

Who Killed Tupac Shakur?

First of two parts
By CHUCK PHILLIPS
This story begins
LAS VEGAS—The city's news lights vibrated in the night as a black BMW, as it cruised up Las Vegas Boulevard, was suddenly recognized. Fans lined the streets, waving, snapping photos, begging "Tupac! Tupac!" for his autograph. Cops were everywhere, and
The BMW 750 sedan, with up magazine Martin "Suge" Knight at the wheel, was leading a procession of luxury vehicles past the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino Palace, on the way to a show at the Flamingo.
Six years later, the killing of the world's most famous rapper is still a mystery.

crowded intersection a block from the Flamingo.
Shirley Buford, with a curfew of 10:30 p.m., had just pulled up beside him. A hand emerged from the Cadillac. It was a man in a suit, a man in a suit, a man in a suit.
Many of the rapper's fans seemed to be in the crowd.
"The last I saw of him, everything they told me," he said in an early '90s "Tupac's Story" interview, "I never got much closer, following the tracks of a soul."



News Roundup!

Congratulations to No Doubt's **GWEN STEFANI** and Bush frontman **GAVIN ROSSDALE**, who were married at Covent Garden Church in London on September 14. Rossdale's dog, Winston, was in attendance.

According to Chuck D, MTV recently refused to play the new video for **PUBLIC ENEMY**'s "Give the People What They Need" until references to African-American journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, who was convicted of murdering a Philadelphia policeman 20 years ago, were removed. Public Enemy refused to do so.

MICHAEL JACKSON has admitted there is "some truth" to the rumor that he wants to re-create his trademark moonwalk — on the moon.

ROBERT "RZA" DIGGS of the Wu-Tang Clan was accused of leading an attack on two computer consultants who created Web sites for the hip-hop group.



Biggie Smalls: The man behind Shakur's murder?



Shakur was on his way to Las Vegas's Club 662 on September 7, 1996, when he was shot.

The story further alleged that Smalls — who himself was gunned down on March 9, 1997 — gave the gang members his gun, a .40-caliber Glock pistol, to shoot Shakur. Crip Orlando Anderson, who had an altercation with Shakur earlier in the evening, is believed to have been the trigger man.

The article has been denounced by Smalls's mother, Voletta Wallace, and by his former comanager Wayne Barrow, who insists that Smalls was in Manhattan the day of the murder.

Shakur's former bodyguard Frank Alexander, who saw the crime unfold from one car away, also refutes writer Chuck Philips's depiction of the events.

"The article is Philips's bizarre imagination of what happened," he told *Blender*.

When contacted by *Blender*, Philips said, "I stand by my story."

WARREN COHEN



Eminem: "I'd like to thank all my bitches at the muthafuckin' Academy And God."

OSCAR BUZZ

8 Mile High!

That's what the elated crowd of fans, celebrities and critics felt about Eminem's performance at the premiere of his new movie

★ **EMINEM** IS A serious contender for next year's Best Actor Oscar, say Hollywood insiders. His new movie, *8 Mile*, received rave reviews at the Toronto Film Festival September 8.

"There was more buzz about *8 Mile* than any other film," Richard Roeper, of *Ebert & Roeper*, told *Blender*. "There are certain moments when people were applauding in the middle of the movie. It almost had a concertlike atmosphere to it. It's that kind of movie, a little *Rocky*-ish, *Saturday Night Fever*-ish."

"It's going to be a huge hit," agreed Rick Groen, film critic for the *Toronto Globe and Mail*. The screening was packed with such celebrities as Sharon Stone, Michael Douglas and Dustin Hoffman.

Advance word on the film, in which Eminem stars as an aspiring rapper alongside Brittany Murphy, Kim Basinger and Mekhi Phifer, made the screening one of the festival's hottest attractions, with lines stretching around the block. Scalpers hawked tickets for upwards of \$50 apiece.

The film's director, Curtis Hanson, and producer, Brian Grazer, count Oscar winners *L.A. Confidential* and *A Beautiful Mind*, respectively, among their credits.

"Eminem does come with a lot of baggage," Roeper said of the multiplatinum-selling artist's Oscar hopes. "But there was a time when people thought Frank Sinatra was just a pop singer. He won an Academy Award."

"I think Eminem can win Best Actor," said Paul Dergarabedian, the president of entertainment-industry tracking firm Exhibitor Relations. "This movie is really getting tremendous buzz."

Because of restrictions imposed by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the voting body responsible for deciding Oscar winners, its members were unable to comment.

Eminem himself skipped the Toronto screening of *8 Mile* to play the final night of his Anger Management tour in his hometown of Detroit. **ALEXANDRA GILL AND SUZANNE ELY**



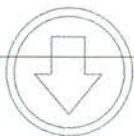
Eminem to costar Mekhi Phifer: "So you feelin' an Oscar for me?"

Word!



Trust me, I'm not going to have a press conference to announce it.

BRITNEY SPEARS, ON GETTING "LUCKY"



True Josey Scott fact: he uses Baby Wipes.

Do You Rock? ★

Josey Scott Does Saliva's Southern-fried frontman rock?

Biggest celeb in your cell phone?

Nikki Sixx. He's the coolest motherfucker.

Ever seen Fred Durst's "bathing suit area"?

No. I'm down with Fred and we've partied, but thankfully I've never seen his wee-wee.

Stripper's pole in your house?

No, but I'd like to get one. It would be dope.

Ever trashed a hotel room?

Once we were partying hard at this hotel on the Sunset Strip called the Riot House — it's where Led Zeppelin drove the motorcycle down the hall — and we're getting crazy. Our guitar player goes, "Dude, the TV!" He picked it up over his head, but we stopped him from throwing it out the window. It's a good thing, because Biz Markie was downstairs. We might have crushed Biz Markie!

Ever drive a car into a pool?

No, but I look forward to it.

Worst tour horror story?

I was tripping balls in Amsterdam, and I saw my bass player turn into Jesus right before my eyes, dude! My manager was sitting beside me. His head was as big as a car and his body the size of Barbie doll. Then, while all this was happening, I found out one of my best friend's dogs died. Then I found out my guitar player's mom was in a car accident. And then I found out Aaliyah died.

Most over-the-top demand for your dressing room?

Dude. Baby Wipes. They're a must on the road. You never know when you're gonna get lucky or you're going to have to do something in a pinch. They're my shower-to-shower essential.

Ever total a car?

About 20. Hold on... Britt! Hey, Britt! C'mere and hand me these Baby Wipes! I'm on the shitter. Sorry. SCOTT DESIMON

Verdict

IT'S UNANIMOUS:
JOSEY SCOTT...ROCKS!

→ SALIVA'S NEW ALBUM, *BACK INTO YOUR SYSTEM* (ISLAND), HITS STORES NOVEMBER 12.

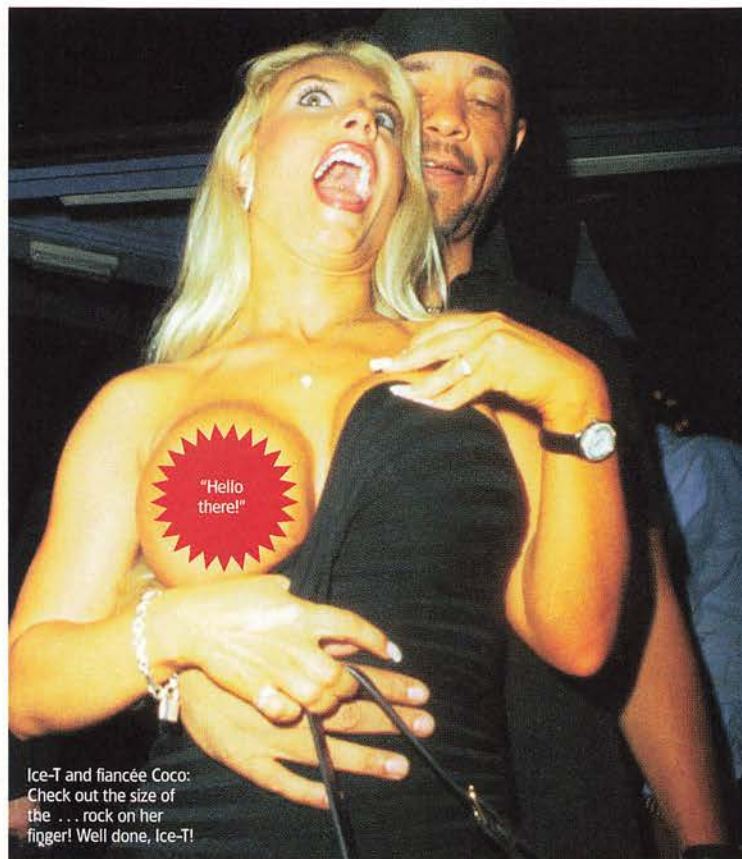
News Roundup!

Ed and Jennifer McKee of Oregon City, Oregon, decided to auction off late Nirvana frontman **KURT COBAIN**'s childhood home on eBay after owning it for just a month.

Following John Travolta's lead, Iron Maiden vocalist **BRUCE DICKINSON** has become a commercial airline pilot.

JENNIFER LOPEZ has refused the use of one of her songs for Britain's Music of Black Origin Awards compilation CD, citing that her music is not of "black origin." Lopez won MTV's Best Hip-Hop Video Award for "I'm Real," which featured **JA RULE**.

U2 frontman **BONO** has recorded a cover of Frank Sinatra's "That's Life" to appear on the soundtrack of the upcoming Neil Jordan film *The Good Thief*.



Ice-T and fiancée Coco: Check out the size of the ... rock on her finger! Well done, Ice-T!



Gulp!

Ice-T and fiancée Coco mix it up

★ ICE-T, 44, pictured here leaving London nightclub 10 Rooms with his fiancée, Coco (born Nicole Austin), was in England to promote his new CD, *Westside*.

The rapper-turned-actor was also celebrating his August engagement to the 23-year-old swimsuit model. The pair plan to marry in January. "We do everything together," beamed the future Mrs. T. "He picks out my clothes every day, so we can always match." CLARISSA LASKY

Word!



Eminem should lighten up. I mean, my mom was a bitch too, but I don't go writing songs about it.

TRIUMPH THE INSULT COMIC DOG, ON HIS ALTERCATION WITH EMINEM

Pop Star Must-Have

BRAIDS!

Inspired by Christina Aguilera, a host of stars are now braiding their hair. Nice!



Axl Rose



Brandy



Muppet Janice



Fieldy

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EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SATELLITE RADIO.

The Next Big Thing!

TAPROOT

Angry Michigan hard-rock foursome disses Fred Durst — and lives to party! Yeah!

TEXT BY NICK DUERDEN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY LEGO



Below: Taproot, from left: Phil Lipscomb, Jarrod Montague, Stephen Richards, Mike DeWolf

"WE PARTIED KINDA hard last night," Taproot's Stephen Richards groans as he rolls over in bed. It is midday in New Orleans. "I know I'm going to regret it."

Ann Arbor, Michigan's Taproot (Richards, 25, vocals; Mike DeWolf, 26, guitar; Phil Lipscomb, 26, bass; Jarrod Montague, 26, drums) is a band on the cusp of major success — and, the previous night's overindulgence notwithstanding, a band that doesn't tend to second-guess its decisions.

For instance, when Taproot signed to Atlantic in 2000 instead of Limp Bizkit's home label, Interscope, Bizkit frontman Fred Durst famously left an abusive message on Richards's answering machine.

"He hasn't apologized, and we've not run into him since," Richards says with a shrug.

"Sure, he was mad, but he'll get over it." He says this without evident regret.

"I'm a guy who taps easily into anger," he continues. "In this business you spend a lot of time surrounded by people you'd like nothing to do with. Hell, I'm angry all the time."

Out of that anger — and in spite of Durst — came Taproot's 2000 debut, *Gift*, which sold 200,000 copies without the benefit of radio play. So the eager attention stations are giving the band's new single, "Poem," means good things for their follow-up CD, *Welcome*.

On the new album, Taproot evoke Alice in Chains given a kick in the ass by Korn — but their sound is definitely *not* nü-metal.

"Nü-metal is pretty poopy," Richards grumbles through his hangover. "We don't bother listening to it at all." [BLENDER]

OUT NOW >>



WELCOME
VELVET HAMMER/
ATLANTIC

> Taproot evoke Alice in Chains given a kick in the ass by Korn.

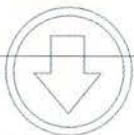


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★ **Weird Band Alert!**



Is it any wonder this band's love is free?

ACID MOTHERS TEMPLE AND THE MELTING PARAIISO U.F.O.
[Underground Freak Out]

A free-loving Japanese commune of dancers and fishermen — that rocks!

Crazy name... crazy guys? Yep. This 14-piece Japanese band is part of a larger 30-person "soul collective" commune made up of dancers, artists and, naturally, fishermen.

So they practice free love? According to the commune's leader, Makoto Kawabata: "If you want to, you can do. If you don't want to, don't. If anyone wants to make love to me, I also want to... any girl!"

Is free love Kawabata's muse? "All I do is play back through my body the sounds that I constantly hear from the cosmos." (Check out acidmothers.com.) DOUGLAS WOLK



RUSSIAN TEENAGE "LESBIANS" ARE A GO!

RUSSIAN TEENAGE pop sensation T.A.T.U. — Julia Volkova, 17, and Lena Katina, 18, above, from left — gave a "touching" performance in Italy for a recent TV show. T.A.T.U. were recently featured in *Blender* ("We Have Seen the Future of Rock & Roll," June/July).

News Roundup!

Oasis singer **LIAM GALLAGHER** has proposed to his girlfriend, former All Saints vocalist Nicole Appleton.

Wind-Up Records will assemble and release a DVD celebrating the life of late Drowning Pool frontman **DAVE WILLIAMS**, and use the first \$250,000 raised to buy his parents a house.

LUDACRIS has offered to be a test subject for a new phone device that fits into the user's teeth.

THE PRETENDERS have invited Academy Award-winning actor Russell Crowe and his band, 30 Odd Foot of Grunts, to tour with them next year.

A bronze bust of the late T. Rex frontman **MARC BOLAN** was unveiled at the Memorial Gardens in the London suburb of Barnes, just yards from the tree where the musician was killed in a car accident in 1977. The \$10,500 sculpture was commissioned by the T. Rex Action Group.

Word!



The other day, I was told that I am always somewhere with my panties off.

TWEET



Chad Hugo (left) and Pharrell Williams of the Neptunes, not hurting for work

Total Domination!

Are the Neptunes driving other producers out of business?

★ THE DOMINATION of the Neptunes and three other big-name producers is forcing most others out of work, says one industry insider.

"It's not like there's an announcement," says manager Zach Katz, whose clients include the multiplatinum-selling rapper Rakim. "It's not going to be in *Billboard* — but there's definitely a [work] drought."

Hugely successful producers the Neptunes (Clipse, Justin Timberlake, Britney Spears), Timbaland (Missy Elliott, Bubba Sparxxx, Ms. Jade), Dr. Dre (Eminem, Snoop Dogg, Busta Rhymes) and Just Blaze (Cam'ron, Fabolous) are now the only beat masters record companies regard as commercial enough to provide the tracks for their most popular acts.

Pharrell Williams, of the Neptunes and N.E.R.D., has little sympathy for the record companies. He blames their

problems on their excessive reliance on brand names and apparent unwillingness to uncover new, less-proven talent.

"They need to give more people more chances," Williams says, "and everything will be fine."

His partner, Chad Hugo, agrees. "There are kids doing stuff in their basements that might just need a few sounds changed," he says. "It's kind of like going into a thrift store and seeing something old and dingy that out in the market might not be up to par, and then bringing it up to where it needs to be. But it's up to the record labels to have that vision."

Meanwhile, artists unable to pay the superstar producers, whose rates start at a staggering \$50,000 per track, are also hit hard. "People like Mad Skillz and Ras Kass suffer," says Shane Mooney, A&R man for Xzibit and the Alkaholiks. "They can't afford the \$50,000." DONNELL ALEXANDER



"Ah-cha-cha-cha-cha!"



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BORA BORA



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Men and For Women
From Liz Claiborne

MACY'S ROBINSONS-MAY FOLEY'S
BURDINES RICH'S LAZARUS GOLDSMITH'S

The Next Big Thing!

3LW

Not even a band bust-up at KFC could deny these superprovocative New Jersey teens pop-star success!

BY NICK DUERDEN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY GUY AROCH

★ SOMETIMES, a family-size bucket of KFC can have a ruinous effect on your nearest and dearest. Take, for example, 3LW, the New Jersey R&B trio whose eponymous 2001 debut sold 1.7 million copies and established them as heirs to Destiny's Child's throne.

A couple of months ago, they were putting the finishing touches on their second album, *A Girl Can Mack*. To celebrate, they took friends and family to KFC. One food fight later, 3LW's Naturi Naughton, 18, covered in the colonel's secret recipe, quit the group.

"All that has been blown out of proportion," says Kiely Williams, 16. "It wasn't a food fight; it was an accident. My 3-year-old sister threw some food. It hit all of us, but Naturi decided to think we did it because we didn't like her. That girl was looking for an excuse to quit."

A day later, Naughton hired a lawyer, went on local radio to say how horrible the rest of 3LW treated her and hinted that a solo career was in her near future.

"I feel so betrayed," says Adrienne Bailon, 18. "She was a good friend. But it's given us a life lesson. Now it's just me and Kiely all the way."

3LW first got together, at Williams's behest, in 1999. Just 13, she decided that she wanted to become famous. Her mother, a music manager, held auditions

and secured the girls a recording contract. Their debut may have sounded sweetly innocent, but they've grown up considerably ever since. Now *A Girl Can Mack*, which features contributions from P. Diddy, is full of sassy rhythms and sexual overtures.

"We prove that kids today are clever and wise and old beyond our years — we know about stuff," Williams points out. "It's all about taking control, baby — taking control!" [BLENDER]

➤ **3LW** are full of sassy rhythms and sexy overtures.



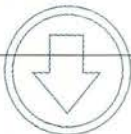
3LW, from left:
Kiely Williams,
Adrienne Bailon



Maybe none of these are your exit.

Drivers wanted.





Kate Moss with next season's hottest accessory: a baby!

PARENT MODEL IS THE NEW MODEL PARENT

AND OTHER LATE-BREAKING DEVELOPMENTS

Madonna, Jewish mystic	is the new	Madonna, Material Girl	
Jacko, movie star	is the new	Jacko, wacko	
Don Trump Jr.	is the new	Donald Trump	
Serena Williams	is the new	Venus Williams	
Kinder, gentler Schwarzenegger	is the new	Terminator	
Guns and Roses	is the new	Guns N' Roses	
American Idol, the movie	is the new	American Idol, the TV show	
Buffy the Vampire Slayer	is the new	Mrs. Freddie Prinze Jr.	
A cargo container	is the new	Lance Bass	
Ben Affleck, toupee wearer	is the new	Ben Affleck, Hollywood heartthrob	
Gwen Rossdale	is the new	Gwen Stefani	
Mother Goldie, Banger Sister	is the new	Daughter Kate, Stillwater groupie	

News Roundup!

Mexican pop singer **RICARDO ABARCA**, 16, had three fingers successfully reattached to his hand after they were severed by a helicopter rotor when he disembarked the aircraft and waved to fans.

The Spanish pornography company Private Media Group Inc. has offered defunct online music company **NAPSTER INC.** 1 million shares of its stock, valued at \$2.4 million, to use Napster's technology and logo to better swap pornography on the Internet.

A Chicago court has banned a local man from ever seeing **FOREIGNER** perform again. The man was accused of jumping onstage and stealing a \$6,000 guitar as the band played at the Naperville, Illinois, Ribfest.

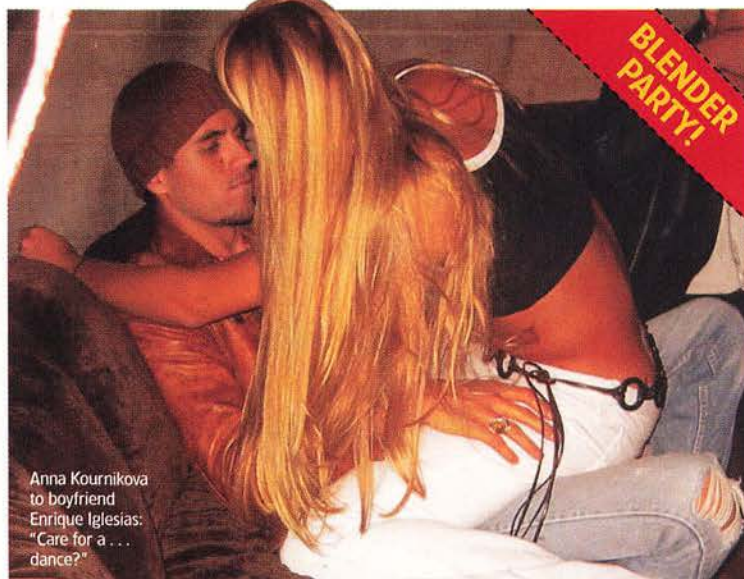
MADONNA has written an open letter to readers of *Icon*, her fan magazine, encouraging them to see her new movie, *Swept Away*. Directed by her husband, Guy Ritchie, the film has received unfavorable reviews.

Word!



The parties are advised to chill.

JUDGE ALEX KOZINSKI, PRESIDING OVER THE LAWSUIT BETWEEN AQUA AND TOYMAKER HATTEL OVER THE BAND'S SONG "BARBIE GIRL"



Anna Kournikova to boyfriend Enrique Iglesias: "Care for a... dance?"

BLENDER PARTY!



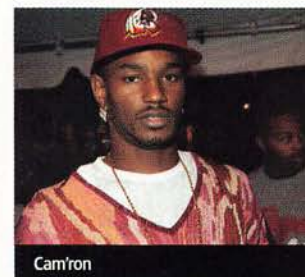
From left: Ashanti, Russell Simmons, Ja Rule, Charli Baltimore, Irv Gotti



LL Cool J



Christina Aguilera, David LaChapelle



Cam'ron

Par-tay!

The *Blender* VMA after-party is a roaring success!

★ **ENRIQUE IGLESIAS** and his girlfriend, Anna Kournikova, were in the VIP room publicly displaying their affection for each other at the *Blender*/Island Def Jam/Pony after-party for the MTV Video Music Awards.

Held at Café St. Barts on Park Avenue in Manhattan on August 29, the party was jammed full with 1,200 guests, while a throng of another few hundred lined the steps of the adjacent church from 11 P.M., hoping to get in.

Inside, Avril Lavigne was seen head-banging to the Hives' "Hate to Say I Told You So." Photographer David LaChapelle was glimpsed chatting up Christina Aguilera in a corner booth, while 'N Sync's Chris Kirkpatrick couldn't keep himself off the dance floor.

The Strokes, Gwen Stefani and Ashanti were joined by the Hives, Ja Rule, Kirsten Dunst, LL Cool J, Vanessa Carlton, Clipse, Linkin Park, P.O.D., Johnny Knoxville, Cam'ron, Sean Penn and David Lee Roth, who said, "I haven't slept since the '80s." To see him, you'd never guess it. . .



Johnny Knoxville

CLARISSA LASKY

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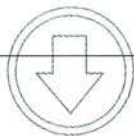
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Gwen Stefani, this is your life as a doll! Yikes.

FACE LIFT!

After a few nips and tucks, Gwen & Co. become real dolls!

THIS MONTH, new poseable figurines of Gwen Stefani and her No Doubt cohorts are set to hit store shelves after being delayed by cosmetic alterations allegedly demanded by the singer.

A spokesman for Stevenson Entertainment, which makes the dolls, told *Blender* that the original release date for the \$28 set was pushed back a few weeks because "Gwen had some changes she wanted made."

However, Stevenson vice president Michael Romano later denied Stefani had any problems with her small plastic likeness — even though the body of her figurine is exactly the same as that of the Kelly Osbourne doll his company is also producing.

"It's the same as if we did Weebles," Romano said. "Gwen would be a round

little egg; Kelly would be a round little egg." ROBERTA COLON



We'll take two.

News Roundup!

TRIUMPH THE INSULT COMIC DOG has recorded his debut album, *Songs in the Key of Poop*, which will be released this winter.

P.O.D. have made the Swedish band *Blindside* the first act signed to their new 3 Points label.

ROD STEWART'S 22-year-old son Sean was sentenced to 90 days in jail and ordered to undergo drug rehabilitation. He was arrested on December 5 for assaulting a man outside a Malibu, California, restaurant.

British pop star **ROBBIE WILLIAMS** has announced that he wants to be known as Robert Williams from now on, in order to distance himself from his boy-band past.

Yellowstone National Park police detained and ticketed **UNWRITTEN LAW** drummer Wade Youman after he stripped naked during a video shoot there.

Word!

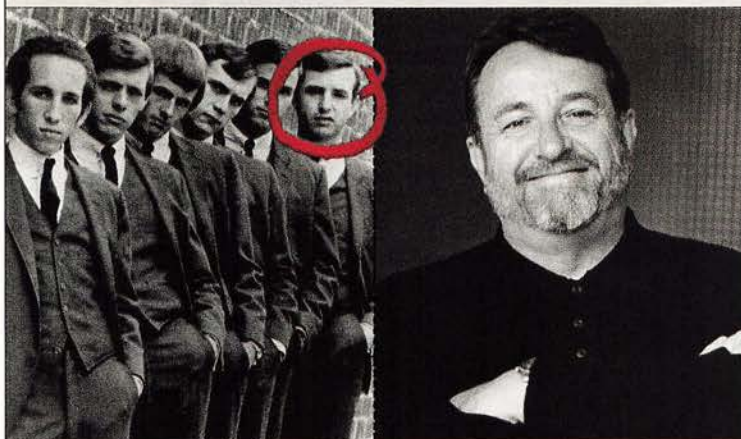


What's the excuse for people who don't smoke [weed]?

NELLY TAKES A STANCE ON THE CONTROVERSIAL TOPIC OF MARIJUANA USAGE

★ Where Are They Now? ★

Life After Rock



Terry Kirkman [of the Association]

THEN!

Vocalist and keyboardist, 1965–1973

NOW!

Clinical director of the Musicians' Assistance Program, Los Angeles

★ "BEING IN the Association was awesome in the true meaning of the word — a life-changing experience that obviously, in 20-20 hindsight, not everyone survives intact.

"Cherish" and "Windy" both reached number 1 [in 1966 and 1967]. We really weren't a rock band — we were a vocal group. There wasn't a category per se to accommodate what the Association was about.

"The biggest compliment we had was on the sixtieth or seventieth birthday of Leonard Bernstein. He was being interviewed on morning TV. Talking about the '60s, he said there were only a few truly creative acts around. The interviewer said, 'Who?' Bernstein said, 'The Beatles and the Association.'"

"When Brian [Cole, bassist and vocalist] died in 1972, I don't think I really flinched. He was shooting heroin and cocaine; I was fried. I left the band in early 1973. I had done well over 1,000 concerts, had a million-and-a-half miles in the air. We were burned to a crisp.

"My alcoholism progressed to a debilitating point. Alcoholism is a horrific nightmare. I quit drinking in 1984. When I was five years sober, I got a call from some people who invited me to be a counselor. I found a place that meant more to me than anything I had experienced. I went back to UCLA and finished my certification for alcohol-and-drug counseling.

"I was invited by jazz saxophonist Buddy Arnold and his wife, Carole Fields, to be clinical director of the Musicians' Assistance Program. MAP is an assistance program, as opposed to a treatment program. We help people who have worked as professionals in the music industry — roadies, people from publishing companies and record companies, all of that.

"I get to help people save their own lives. We're pretty special, and I am lucky to work here.

"My alcoholism progressed to a debilitating point."

"MAP is full circle for me. It's part of my healing. The Association was a marvelous experience, but right now I'm a happy guy." AS TOLD TO JON REGARDIE

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Useful Tips From the Stars!

USE CAUTION!

HOW TO ...

Make a Flaming Asshole with
Sammy Hagar

The former Van Halen singer just wrapped up a taxing three-month tour with fellow ex-VH frontman David Lee Roth. ("Dave's an uptight prick!") So to unwind, the big-haired connoisseur of authentic Mexican tequilas fires up a Flaming Asshole — an alcoholic drink, of course!

AS TOLD TO CHRIS BAKER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAY BLAKESBERG

I'd rather do *anything* than puke.

1 Shell Out!

"First, you gotta have a well-stocked bar. An abundance of glasses, a good shaker, organic mixers, sea salt, Tabasco or Tapatio, and some very fresh, juicy limes. You need at least four or five different tequilas. My favorite is Cabo Wabo. Get blanco for Bloody Marys, reposado for martinis, aged añejo to drink straight. ... There's a different one for each purpose."

2 Mix It In!

"A Flaming Asshole is one shot of tequila to one teaspoon of Tabasco and one teaspoon of Worcestershire sauce. Fancy mixing techniques and showmanship are cool, but it wastes time. It's sort of like going to Benihana: The cook is doing all these crazy moves, and I'm thinking, 'Just gimme my damn food!'"

3 Fire It Up!

"Here come da torch! Oh, this fuckin' makes me nervous. Be extra careful if you have big heavy-metal hair — I couldn't have done this in the '80s. And wear sunglasses to protect your eyes. They also protect what's going on in your head. Now blow out the drink and down it while it's still hot!"

4 Hold It Down!

"I'm just a pretend alcoholic. I go into my club — Cabo Wabo Cantina in Mexico — and 20 different people wanna buy me a drink. I can't do it. I've learned to start with a few shots, then move on to cocktails or margaritas. That way, you can go all night. Maintain a buzz as long as you can, because once you're really drunk, you're fucked. I'd rather do *anything* than puke."

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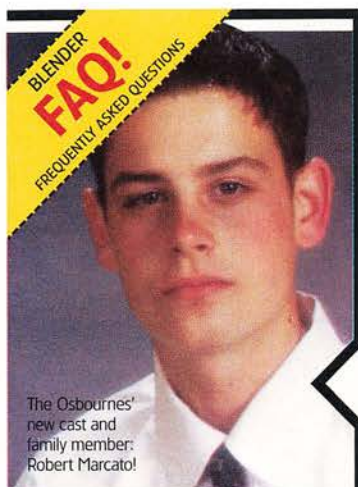
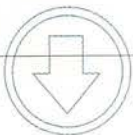
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The Osbournes' new cast and family member: Robert Marcato!

THE NEW OSBOURNE!

The Osbournes have adopted a new "son," Robert, for their new season. But who is he?



We knew Kelly and Jack Osbourne have an older sister, Aimee, who decided not to be on MTV's *Osbournes*. But who's Robert?

He's Robert Marcato, whose 36-year-old mother, Regan, died of colon cancer on July 30. Robert is close friends with Kelly and Aimee Osbourne, and is a classmate of Kelly's. A week before Regan died, Sharon and Ozzy Osbourne promised they would take care of her son. "Don't you worry about a thing — he's my son now," Ozzy told her.

What about Sharon?

"When I look at somebody like Regan, who didn't have the resources I had, what the fuck have I got to complain about?" said the Osbourne matriarch, who is currently receiving treatment for the same type of cancer that claimed Robert's mother.

Is Robert changing his name?

No. But Sharon calls him Baby Osbourne, even though he's 18.

Is he going to have his own place to live?

"He lives in the house now," Kelly said. "He'll be in the next series."

What does he want to do with his life?

He'd like to go to drama school, and the Osbournes have promised to support him.

Pardon the awful cynicism, but is his addition a sign that *The Osbournes* could be losing steam — like when Scrappy Doo joined *Scooby Doo*?

"It reminds me more of Vicki on *The Love Boat*," says Jon Hein, the founder of jumptheshark.com, the Web site that obsessively tracks the moments that make popular television shows go sour. "It's more natural to introduce a new character on *The Osbournes*, but I'm very skeptical." DARIUS MCGEE



News Roundup!

Former Roxy Music singer **BRYAN FERRY**, 56, has split from Lucy Helmore, his wife of 20 years. He has started dating Katie Turner, a 21-year-old dancer and backup singer currently on tour with him.

JADE JAGGER, daughter of Rolling Stone Mick, recently announced that she will employ only attractive people in her London jewelry store: "I can't understand people who have ugly people working for them. I really can't."

KYLIE MINOGUE has denied reports that she suffered a nervous breakdown brought on by her work schedule and troubles with her ex-boyfriend while filming her new video, "Come Into My World," in early September.

Motor City Madman and gun-rights advocate **TED NUGENT** said he has tentative plans to run for governor of Michigan in 2006.

Word!



I really fell in love with the Muppets all over again.

SNOOP DOGG, ON HIS UPCOMING APPEARANCE IN A VERY MUPPET CHRISTMAS MOVIE

★ In the Studio



Ben Harper: Hey, cheer up — that bass line sounds great!

"Sick Directions"

That's where Ben Harper is heading on his new album

★ "LAURA IS DEFINITELY my muse," sighs Ben Harper of his movie-star girlfriend (and onetime Billy Bob Thornton squeeze), Laura Dern. "Whatever can inspire a song or can inspire creativity to a high degree is a muse."

That may be the case, but it's difficult to imagine the muses of Greek legend cooking the 33-year-old singer-songwriter brunch as well. "I get up around noon, maybe have my girl make me something to eat, get to the studio around 3 and try to record for 12 hours," says Harper of his regimen, a schedule which has most recently borne fruit in the shape of his fifth studio CD, *Diamonds on the Inside*.

"The songs were going in sick directions," he enthuses. "From old-school reggae toward Sabbath."

The album was recorded at Sunset Sound in Hollywood, where the Rolling Stones' *Exile on Main Street*, *Led Zeppelin IV* and Prince's first five albums were mixed. South African song-and-dance troupe Ladysmith Black Mambazo (who sang on Paul Simon's hit 1986 album, *Graceland*) joined Harper's band, the Innocent Criminals, for one song.

Another highlight is "Bring the Funk," which Harper says is "like LL Cool J's 'Radio.' That's when hip-hop was made with the most inexpensive keyboards, the most inexpensive drum machines and a mic. We found common ground between that and what we do."

Harper says he plans to have *Diamonds on the Inside* completed for a February release. **ROB KEMP**

ALSO IN THE STUDIO >>>>



Linkin Park: Who knew the Chicken Dance was so darn funky?

Rap-rock supremos **LINKIN PARK** are recording the follow-up to 2000's 8 million-selling *Hybrid Theory* at a Los Angeles studio with Hybrid producer Don Gilmore....

Indie-rock "blow job queen" **LIZ PHAIR** has begun sessions in Encino, California, for her first album since 1998's *whitechocolate-spaceegg*. She's working with the Matrix, the production team behind Avril Lavigne's *Let Go*....

Chicago rapper **COMMON** is at New York's Electric Lady Studios recording the unnamed successor to 2000's Grammy-nominated *Like Water for Chocolate*....

THE PRODIGY have recorded tracks in Essex, England, with Massive Attack's 3D and Oasis's Liam Gallagher for their first album since 1999's chart-topping *The Fat of the Land*. It's scheduled for a spring release....

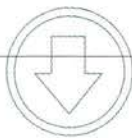
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★ What's in Your Bag?



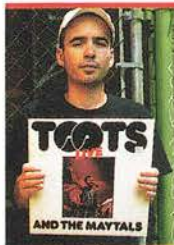
Darren Seltmann (left) and Robbie Chater of the Avalanches: Cheer up, fellas!

THE AVALANCHES

At Aron's Records, 1150 North Highland Avenue, Los Angeles



THE BAND STAGE FRIGHT
Darren Seltmann: "The Shape I'm In" is a fantastic track. We've used 'Life Is a Carnival' in one of the live mixes. That blew people's minds. We wish we were the Band. They had this incredible cohesion."



TOOTS AND THE MAYTALS LIVE AT HAMMERSMITH PALAIS
Robbie Chater: "This has 'Funky Kingston' on it, which we've been playing a lot. It has these great backing vocals that get everybody amped."



FRANKLYN AJAYE I'M A COMEDIAN, SERIOUSLY
Seltmann: "I've always loved comedy records. Look at the titles: The first is 'Homosexuals'. Second: 'Girls With Big Breasts.' I would love to have made this in another life."



EL-P FANTASTIC DAMAGE
Chater: "They don't fall into the trap that a lot of hip-hop does, where it's the same sound on every song. From a production standpoint, this is really interesting." **JON REGARDIE**

→ THE AVALANCHES' MOST RECENT ALBUM IS *SINCE I LEFT YOU* (MODULAR/SIRE)

News Roundup!

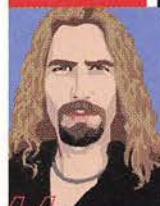
The *Fast and the Furious* costars Vin Diesel and **JARVIS PATTERSON** will appear together in the upcoming films *Pitch Black: Shades of Color* and *The Chronicles of Riddick*.

Anne White, 21, of Burbank, California, was struck and killed by a truck while waiting outside Los Angeles radio station KHS-FM for **JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE** to make a scheduled appearance.

Police issued a summons to **WHITNEY HOUSTON** for violating New Jersey's water-use restrictions when they found sprinklers running at her estate when she wasn't home.

Surviving members of **THE DOORS** plan to tour and record a new album next year with **IAN ASTBURY** of the Cult, **SCOTT WEILAND** of Stone Temple Pilots and **SCOTT STAPP** of Creed filling in for Jim Morrison.

Word!



It's up to you: Do you want to hear some rock & roll, or do you want to go home?

NICKELBACK FRONTMAN CHAD KROEGER, JUST BEFORE FANS IN PORTUGAL PELTED HIM WITH ROCKS



Ryan Adams to Marianne Faithfull: "Do you know what MILF stands for?"

"Celebrate Crap!"

That's what Ryan Adams says he did at his new art show



★ **ALT-COUNTRY** hitmaker Ryan Adams recently had a New York City opening for an exhibition of his paintings. The show

was dubbed RIP: A Celebration of Crap Art. "In no way do I take myself seriously as an artist," Adams later acknowledged to *Blender*. So why the show? "Any excuse to have a party."

The event, held at Niagara, an East Village bar, brought out Adams's celeb pals, including the Strokes, Queens of the Stone Age, Marianne Faithfull, Rufus Wainwright and Melissa Auf der Maur — as well as the singer's girlfriend, aspiring pop star Leona Naess.

It also led to some preshow jitters. "I was more nervous for the

opening than for any of my gigs," Adams admitted. "Before arriving, I had the honor of throwing up." The singer enjoyed a medicinal six shots of tequila to calm his nerves.

Asked to elaborate on his thoughts about his artwork, Adams responded, "I'm sorry, I'm too fucked up." **SARAH WILSON**



From left: Faithfull, Adams, Rufus Wainwright, Melissa Auf der Maur



Eve: "Oh, Courtney, you fun-loving scamp!"

HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!

➤➤ **ROCKER-TURNED-actress** Courtney Love, 38, recently joked with rapper-turned-actress Eve, 23, at the after-party for the movie *Barbershop*.

The movie — which marks Eve's big-screen debut and also stars Ice Cube, Cedric the Entertainer and Sean Patrick Thomas — premiered the night of September 6 at the Esquire Theater in St. Louis.

This fall, Love will begin shooting a new film adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* — playing the psychotic Lady herself. **CLARISSA LASKY**

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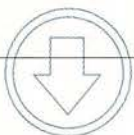
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MARIAH'S \$20K

Pop diva Mariah Carey splurges on fog machines and booze while recording new album



MARIAH CAREY reportedly spent approximately \$20,000 on fog machines, candles, flowers and cases of Santa Margarita Pinot Grigio wine this spring while in the studio recording *Mariah*, her first album on Island, which is due in stores this December.

Carey purchased her creature comforts to strike the proper studio ambience, says her producer, 7 Aurelius, who oversaw the recording sessions in Capri, Italy, and the mixing in Nassau, the Bahamas.

"It was just her, a glass of wine and a microphone, pouring her soul out onto tape," the Murder Inc. producer told *Blender*. He added that Carey is the most professional artist he's ever worked with. JENNIFER BIRN



Tell Us a Joke!



SINÉAD O'CONNOR

Did you hear about the Palestinian woman on the bus? She asked if her dress made her bomb look fat.

AS TOLD TO OPHELIA TEETZ

Obits

HENRY KNOWLES
44, August 29, in San Jose, California, of leukemia and hepatitis C. Guitarist of the '80s "Nardcore" skate-punk band Aggression.

RON McCROBY
68, August 5, in Aurora, Ohio, of a heart attack. Master whistler who played with jazz groups and orchestras. Appeared on *The Tonight Show* five times, and played the voice of a whistling penguin on *Scooby Doo*.

PAUL TRIPP
91, August 29, in New York City, of natural causes. Actor and lyricist known as a musical-appreciation educator for his creation of Tubby the Tuba, the 1945 orchestrated tale-turned-animated film.

CYRINDA FOXE
50, September 7, in New York City, of a brain tumor. Ex-wife of both Aerosmith frontman Steven Tyler and New York Dolls singer David Johansen. Foxe, whose real name was Kathleen Hetzekian, published the tell-all book *Dream On* in 1997.

LIONEL HAMPTON
94, August 31, in New York City, of heart failure. Vibraphone player and bandleader. The "king of vibes" was the first to popularize the instrument in jazz. Played with almost every giant of the form, including Louis Armstrong, Benny Goodman, Charlie Parker and Nat "King" Cole.



EXCLUSIVE

Top, Adam Ant in 1981; above, in London, November 2001

Busted!

Adam Ant, '80s pop icon, talks to *Blender* about his recent arrest, mental health issues and living with Heather Graham

★ FORMER POP STAR Adam Ant recently pleaded guilty to threatening London pub customers with a replica pistol after they mocked him by humming the theme to *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*.

The British singer, whose real name is Stuart Goddard, had walked into the Prince of Wales pub in North London wearing a cowboy hat and combat jacket with the replica gun in his pocket, intending to pistol-whip the husband of a woman he had befriended. After patrons mocked the singer by humming Ennio Morricone's famous theme song, Ant flung a car alternator through the pub window. Customers chased him until he scared them off by brandishing the pistol.

Ant recently told *Blender* he had concerns over how the media would portray the incident. "The way it's reported, I know," he said, "is 'rock star goes nuts.'"

Ant has a history of mental illness

dating back more than 25 years. He has attempted suicide once, and has been plagued by two stalkers.

"Maybe in my case people feel they have license to say and do things that are not acceptable," Ant said.

In Los Angeles in 1989, Ant began dating — and moved in with — actress Heather Graham. "We were very much in love. I think I would definitely have stayed in that little place and been quite happy," he said. For two years, everything was fine. "Then I got a stalker — and then I had to leave."

Police arrested a second stalker in London last November, the same month Ant celebrated his forty-seventh birthday. The "Goody Two Shoes" singer chose to mark the occasion by having his first drink since 1977. "I hadn't drunk for 20 years," he said.

Ant, who had never broken the law before, had been drinking the night of the incident at the Prince of Wales pub.

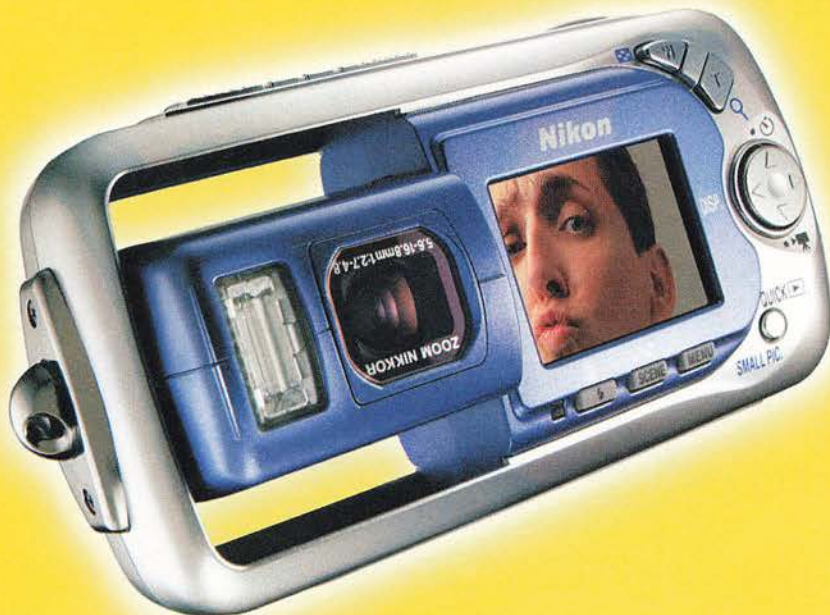
He had also stopped taking his prescription anti-depressants. SID NICHOLS



A post-Adam Ant Heather Graham.



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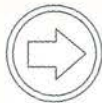




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On the scene like a trans-sex machine?

I just read that in the '60s, people thought James Brown was a transsexual! What's that all about?

JESSE HENDERSON, GROSSE POINTE, MICHIGAN

Strangely, some fans thought the Hardest Working Man had plans to become a woman. Even more strangely, Brown's eccentric manager, Ben Bart, concocted the story as a publicity stunt, leading a magazine gossip columnist to report in 1965 that Brown was going to Europe for a sex-change operation so he could wed his longtime bandmate Bobby Byrd.

The ploy worked, boosting ticket sales. At one gig in California, some fans stormed the stage and grabbed at Brown's crotch. "I was wearing a lot of makeup then," he wrote in his autobiography. "And that added fuel to the fire."

I hear Joe Pesci wanted to be a musician before he became a Hollywood star. Did he ever actually release any albums?

LIZ WU, WILMETTE, ILLINOIS

As Pesci himself might say, "How the fuck am I musical?" Weirdly enough, the short-statured, loudmouthed goodfella was pals with jazz musicians Willis Jackson and Jimmy Scott while growing up in Newark, New Jersey.

Pesci spent years eking out a living as a nightclub singer and guitarist, and in the late '60s, as Joe Ritchie, he released *Little Joe Sure Can Sing*, featuring Beatles and Bee Gees covers. Sadly, *Little Joe* was not a success, though Pesci's reading of "Got to Get You Into My Life" appears on the Rhino Records collection *Golden Throats 4: Celebrities Butcher the Songs of the Beatles*.

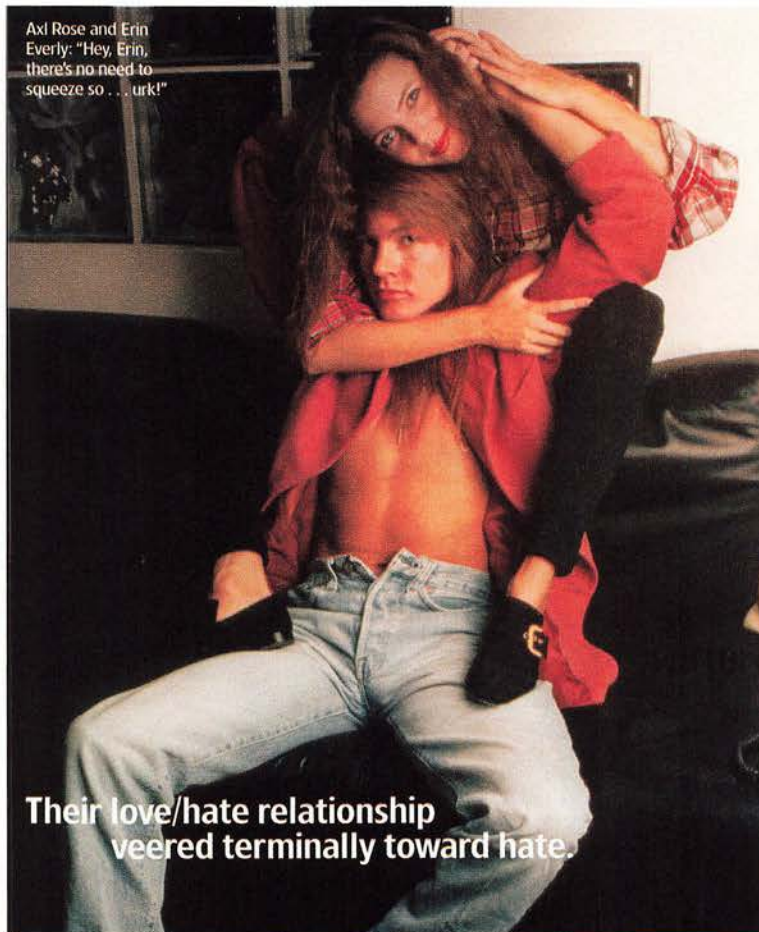
In 1998, Pesci released an album, *Vincent LaGuardia Gambini Sings Just for You*, whose songs included "Yo Cousin Vinny" and "Take Your Love and Shove It."

What band inspired *This Is Spinal Tap*?

WES WEIGEL, RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA

Many claim to have been the blueprint for the 1984 mockumentary, including Status Quo, who (like the Tap) hopped onto every imaginable '60s musical bandwagon, and Black Sabbath, who toured with a life-size Stonehenge replica too big to fit into some venues.

The real models were the metal-heads in the British band Saxon, who invited *Spinal Tap* director Rob Reiner on tour, where he saw them get lost backstage. Harry Shearer based his character, Derek Smalls, on Steve Dawson, Saxon's mustachioed bassist, who often pointed his index finger heavenward while playing.



Their love/hate relationship veered terminally toward hate.

Did Axl Rose write "November Rain" for anyone in particular?

JUAN LIZARRAGA, SAN DIEGO

Axl's unraveling marriage to model Erin Everly inspired the epic Guns N' Roses ballad. In happier days, the daughter of the Everly Brothers' Don Everly inspired a more upbeat hit, "Sweet Child o' Mine," but by 1991 their love/hate relationship had veered terminally toward hate.

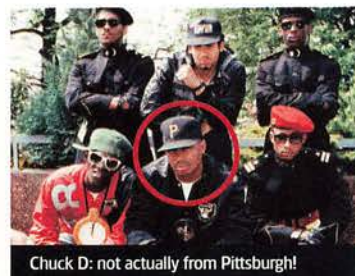
"'November Rain' is a song about not wanting to be in the state and having to deal with unrequited love," Rose has said. To help himself move on, Rose cast model Stephanie Seymour as the bride in the song's epic video, and the pair began dating soon after filming. Both women later sued (and settled with) Rose, claiming domestic abuse — Everly was actually subpoenaed to assist Seymour's case.

Why does Public Enemy's Chuck D wear a Pittsburgh Pirates baseball cap (black with a gold P)? Is it because the Pirates fielded the first all non-white Major League team?

SAM ZETS, PITTSBURGH

Good guess, Sam. (That, plus the fact that the Pirates' P also stands for Public.) On September 1, 1971, the Pirates played an all-black lineup against the Philadelphia Phillies and won, 10-7. But black power wasn't on the agenda: Pirates manager Danny Murtaugh, facing postgame reporters, sniffed: "I put the nine best athletes out there. The best nine I put out there tonight happened to

be black. No big deal. Next question." The Pirates' other claim to hip-hop cred: They once scouted a high-school baseball star named Cornell Haynes Jr. — better known today as Nelly.



Chuck D: not actually from Pittsburgh!

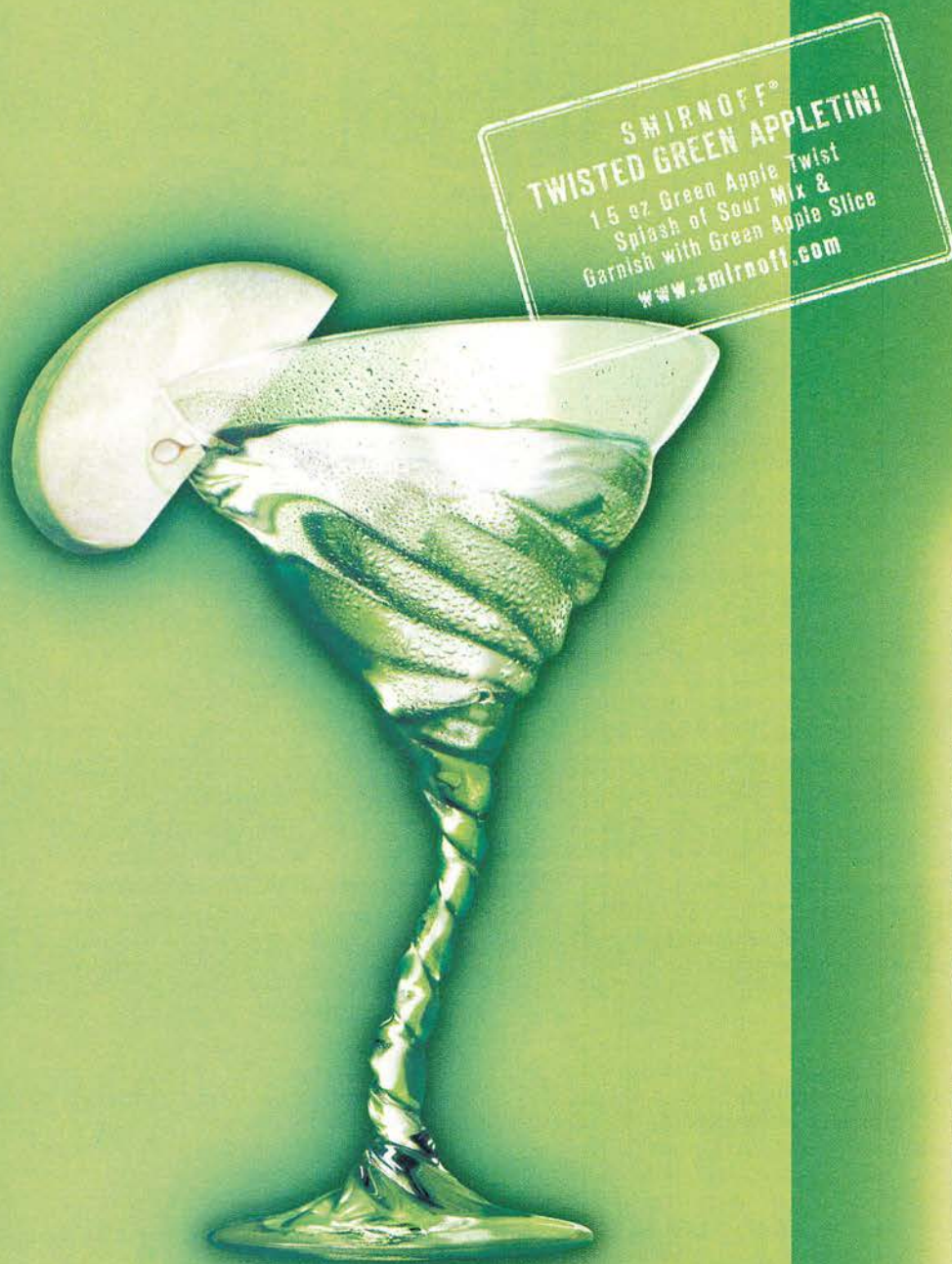


Saxon smell the glove.

YOUR QUESTIONS

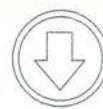
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BLENDER EXPLORES THE FINEST TUNES IN HISTORY



Hard Knock Life

A jaded **Jay-Z** was about to quit performing forever when he stumbled upon a shrill song from *Annie*, the classic Broadway musical about a plucky red-haired orphan. One quintuple-platinum CD later, the original vocalist was incensed. . . .

COMIC-BOOK characters frequently save the world. But only Little Orphan Annie has saved a hip-hop career.

In the months before he released "Hard Knock Life," following some grueling tour experiences, Jay-Z was planning to quit performing to concentrate on running his record label, Roc-A-Fella. "I wanted to move on to that aspect of the business," he has said, "instead of running around performing . . . stay somewhere and just put out a lot of new artists."

But his enthusiasm was rekindled in the month it took him to record Vol. 2 . . . *Hard Knock Life* at New York's Hit Factory: "With this album, I was in a real zone creatively. I was so happy making this album — I was like, 'Feed me beats!'" The most startling sonic clash to emerge from this period of intense creativity was the title track, an innovative and completely unexpected melding of rap with a 20-year-old Broadway show tune.

Jay-Z first encountered "Hard Knock Life" on tour. "Kid Capri was playing it," Jay-Z has noted.

"He was the DJ in between sets, and we were just coming offstage. When you come offstage, usually you hype over the performance — everybody's showing you love and you're in the zone. So that [song] interrupted that whole thing, and I still paid attention to that. It was a real special song."

"Hard Knock Life," written by Charles Strouse and Martin Charnin in 1977 for the Grammy- and Tony-winning musical *Annie*, wasn't exactly an obvious choice for Jay-Z, but composer Strouse says he can see the connection. "In some areas, there's parallel thinking between me and Jay-Z," he says. "Most of the songs in *Annie* are very 1920s, more upbeat, but 'Hard Knock Life' had to reflect the fact that the kids in the story were underprivileged and exploited. So I wrote a very angry, angular melody, quite unlike the other songs."

Jay-Z has confirmed Strouse's thinking, explaining the attraction of Charnin's lyric: "'Instead of treated, we get tricked/Instead of kisses, we get kicked' — anybody who ever went through any hardship can relate to that song."

VITAL STATISTICS

SONG
"Hard Knock Life
(Ghetto Anthem)"

ARTIST
Jay-Z

LABEL
Roc-A-Fella/
Def Jam

PERFORMER
Jay-Z
vocals

PRODUCERS
Mark James (The
45 King), Jay-Z

RELEASED
November 7, 1998

HIGHEST CHART POSITION
15

To Jay-Z, the exploited child laborers in *Annie* suffer problems similar to those of ghetto kids, and they respond similarly. "They ain't singing that song as if they're sad about it: 'OK, this is our situation. We gonna make the best of it.'"

While considering how to transform "Hard Knock Life" into a hip-hop smash, Jay-Z found a second source of inspiration in the Pras track "Ghetto Supastar," featured on the soundtrack to the Warren Beatty movie *Bulworth*. "I was like, 'Wow!' . . . A song like that, it just fits you, and I feel that song fits me so perfectly. I called Pras, and I was like, 'Man! How could you not give me that song?'"

Any doubts that a hit could be fashioned from two such diametrically opposed genres were swept aside when the single first earned New York radio airplay and then spread to other cities, peaking at number 15 nationally in March 1999. (In the U.K., it hit number 2.) Vol. 2 . . . *Hard Knock Life* went platinum in its first week of release and remained at the top of the charts for five weeks, ultimately going quintuple-platinum.

Still, Charles Strouse never heard about the song until it charted. "I heard two black girls singing it in the street," he says. "As we didn't have a very big black audience, I wondered why."

Simple: Jay-Z had cleared the copyright

hoops on using the *Annie* sample at the heart of his song, but Strouse's publisher hadn't bothered to notify the composer. "Musically, Jay-Z uses my melody exactly as written, except for the addition of rap beats," Strouse says. "But as the

WHO'S WHO?



JAY-Z
The multiplatinum hip-hop superstar can boast a phenomenal music career, record label and clothing line.



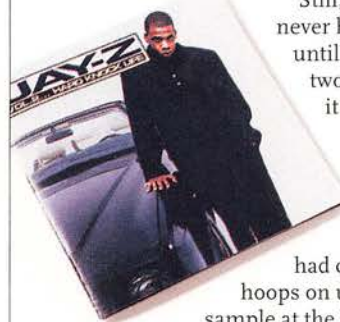
KID CAPRI
Record producer and self-styled "World's Greatest DJ." Born Anthony Love, Capri also spins for New York City's WBLS-FM.



CHARLES STROUSE
Award-winning Broadway composer with more than 16 musicals to his credit, including *Bye Bye Birdie*.



DANIELLE BRISEBOIS
An actress on the Broadway stage from age 6, Brisebois more recently has written and sung for the New Radicals.





Boyz on the hood:
Jay-Z (center) and crew



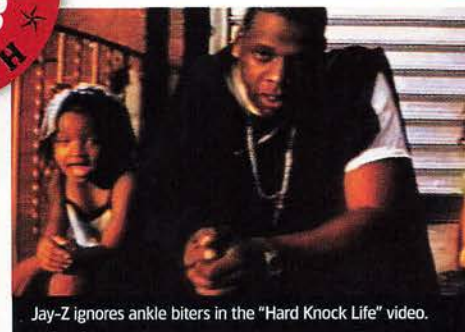
song was very percussive to start with, that's not too worrying."

What was worrying, though, was Jay-Z's lyrical content. "There's a lot of 'niggers' in there, and I don't think that does black people any good. I'm Jewish, and I'd find it insulting to be referred to as a kike," Strouse says. Still, he admits, "I'm flattered that my tune has become part of the consciousness of a whole new group." His wallet has also been greatly enriched by royalties from Jay-Z's multi-platinum sales.

Singer Danielle Brisebois, however, feels she hasn't accrued her just rewards. Between ages 7 and 10, she performed in *Annie* on Broadway, and her voice leads the chorus Jay-Z sampled. In an ironic extension of the plight of *Annie*'s characters, she now feels she was exploited for having performed for a flat fee rather than a royalty. "I'm singing the lead vocal on a number 1 song," she gripes, "but not making a penny out of it."



Danielle Brisebois enjoyed her child-labor gig.



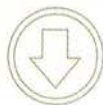
Jay-Z ignores ankle biters in the "Hard Knock Life" video.

As for Jay-Z, "Hard Knock Life" earned him something even better than money: acclaim from his childhood hero, Michael Jackson, who asked Jay-Z to work with him. According to Jay-Z, Jackson told him, "'You were just so in the pocket on that record, landin' right on the beat. Incredible.'"

"You were just so in the pocket on that record. Incredible."

MICHAEL JACKSON PAYS HIS RESPECTS TO JAY-Z

A more recent accolade came from another reclusive, eccentric, mysterious source: Dr. Evil, Mike Myers's spy-spoof villain, who parodied the hit in the summer blockbuster *Austin Powers in Goldmember*. Along with his more traditional credits — such as winning the *Billboard* 1998 R&B Album of the Year award and the 1998 Best Rap Album Grammy for Vol. 2... *Hard Knock Life* — it looks as though the kid from the projects finally got treated instead of tricked. **JOHNNY BLACK**



YOU SEND QUESTIONS, WE GET ANSWERS. WHO LOVES YA, BABY?

Jon Bon Jovi

He's a cowboy, and on a "steel horse" he rides. But Jon Bon Jovi is also the guy answering your queries about his rap sheet, his disappearing chest hair... and whether he's ever seen Heather Locklear naked

BY CLARK COLLIS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANNY CLINCH

★ "YOU THINK Norah Jones is fucking Willie Nelson?" asks Jon Bon Jovi, staring at a photo of the jazz chanteuse in a recent *Blender*. "She sure talks about him a lot."

We point out that the notion of the youthful Jones coupling with the great-but-grizzled Nelson seems a little unlikely.

"You'd be surprised," Bon Jovi says with a laugh, lighting up a cigarette in his suite at New York's Bryant Hotel. "We were down in Nashville, and Willie is hanging out with these good-looking young girls. And look at [Counting Crows'] Adam Duritz! He had two girls from *Friends*. And he ain't the most handsome kid on the block."

Unlike, that is, a certain 40-year-old frontman — who's every bit the pinup he was in the 1980s, when he and his band spent as much money on hair spray as on guitars.

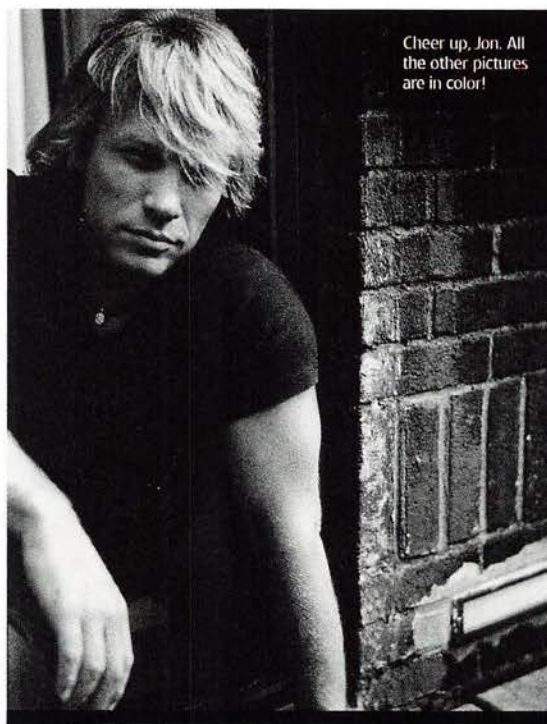
"Yeah, I think we paid for a house or two for VO5 executives," jokes the singer, in town to promote his band's latest CD, *Bounce*. "I had the name of the album before 9/11," he recalls. "I left a note on our Web site asking if I should rename it *Bounce Back*. All I got were messages saying, 'Why don't you call it *Physical Graffiti*?' But that didn't seem like a very good idea. . . ."

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What's the most depraved thing you've ever seen on tour?

WILLYCO2, STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK

I remember a phone placed in a lady's private parts. Then calling the international operator to see if we could hear him. [In muffled German accent] "This is the international operator!" We had our versions of Led Zeppelin's fish stories. Youth brings out the fun stuff. But it was a time before AIDS and weddings.

What do you think of Bruce Springsteen's new album, *The Rising*?

SPEARBRIT, OKLAHOMA CITY

Honestly, it's not finding its way back to my record player. I've heard it a couple of times. I don't *dislike* it. But its subject matter is too specific for my tastes.

Have you ever been arrested?

NONONOYES, HEMPSTEAD, NEW YORK

Technically, yeah. One time I broke into [Central Park's] Wollman Rink in a drunken stupor and went ice skating with my then girlfriend, now wife, in 1989. I told the cops who I was, and that I was playing at the arena the next night. They said, well, show us ID. I didn't have any on me, so they took us down. They called [Donald] Trump, because technically he owned it, and he said let them go.

What do you remember about singing on the *Star Wars Christmas Album* back in 1980?

TUBASAMOK, DALLAS

A \$186 check. I thought that was just the shit — I got paid by a record company to sing a song. What was the song? "R2D2: We Wish You a Merry Christmas." It was 1980; I was sweeping floors at the Power Station. This guy named Meco Monardo made those records. He'd take John Williams's scores and put disco beats to them. He had a number 1 single with the first *Star Wars* record, so they made a *Star Wars* Christmas record, because that's the obvious thing to do, right? [Laughs]

Have you ever considered having plastic surgery?

RALLYCAP, NEWARK, DELAWARE

Man, if they could make me taller and give me a bigger dick, I'd be into it. Other than that, you know, everything else is in place.

As a large-breasted fan, I'd like to request that your tour T-shirts have the word *BOUNCE* on the back, not across the chest. Otherwise, some females will get a lot of comments.

POSSUMBUNCH, INDIAN HEAD, MARYLAND

Fine! Fine! Prudes! I'll wear it on the front! [Blender points out that Bon →



“Oh, man, I’ve sold my soul a few times.
We would do anything
to get the music out there.”

★ JON BON JOVI

Jovi is not exactly "large-breasted." Well, OK... I'll take her opinion into consideration.

What are the strangest rumors about yourself you've ever heard?

JB182, NUTLEY, NEW JERSEY

That I was the kid on *The Dick Van Dyke Show*. That my marriage was annulled for the sake of the band.

Why do critics generally give your band such a hard time? Is it like David Lee Roth says — that music critics like Elvis Costello because they look like Elvis Costello?

DEREKBLISS

David was always great at those one-liners. Poor David. I really, truly don't mind a review that is an honest opinion. But there are some that are just... they've got a vendetta against the band for some reason. I remember a guy who quit being a journalist because he was going to start a rock band, and all I could think was, "I can't wait until he makes a record."

What did you think about Triumph, the Insult Comic Dog, making fun of you recently on *Late Night With Conan O'Brien*?

NANINHELL, HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA

One thing about that — we got him as much as he got us, but they had the scissors to edit the film.

Does your wife ever get sick of female fans swooning over you?

CHUNKY_MILK14

She doesn't give a fuck. One of the greatest things about our relationship is that she's such an independent woman. This is the last thing on her mind. She's also been with me since high school, so she's seen it grow, she's seen it fall, she's seen it grow again. She's definitely not intimidated by any of it.

What's the most embarrassing thing you've done for publicity?

THEDIET, RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA

Oh, man, I've sold my soul a few times. You know, the Spanish soap opera in South America where you do a walk-on. Or hosting things like the Laureus World Sports Awards in Monaco. You wonder, "What the fuck am I doing here?" We ran the gamut, especially early on. We'd do anything to get the music out there.

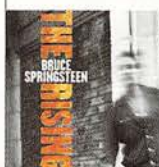
Do you tailgate before New York Giants football games?

THEGIF, KEARNEY, NEW JERSEY

I do. It's not as good now as it was in



"Hold on, this is a subpoena!"



Bon Jovi: "I don't dislike it..."



Triumph: doggy style

the [Bill] Parcells years. Then, it was an event. The thing about tailgating at Giants games is, you go there around 10:30 in the morning with homemade wines and sausage-and-pepper sandwiches for breakfast. It's like an Italian wedding. Everyone's bringing something else from the kitchen. Some things, you can't figure out what they are, but they all taste good.

How do I think the Giants are going to do this season? I'm predicting a wild-card playoff berth. That's probably being optimistic. But I went to a preseason game last weekend, and they looked surprisingly good.

Did you have your balls caught in your zipper when you hit the high notes at the end of "Runaway"? It sounds like a yell I let out in a similar situation.

GINSBERG, MICHAEL, PHILADELPHIA

I regret that high note. I don't hit those notes anymore — don't even attempt them. That's the sound of a



It was an episode of *Survivor* no one would ever forget.



You from Joisey? I'm from Joisey! Bon Jovi with New York Giants QB Kerry Collins

"I am the whitest man in America."

20-year-old man, not a 40-year-old man. But I caught my pee-pee in a zipper once when I was a little kid. I never forgot that.

I'm a big fan of your music and your acting. But I recently bought the *Vampires: Los Muertos* DVD [the shabby sequel to *John Carpenter's Vampires*, in which Bon Jovi starred], and I was wondering if I could maybe have all of my money back.

RACHELMAYO, SAN FRANCISCO

"Merry Christmas, Grand Moff Tarkin!"

Yeah, please. If you can have your money back, then I'd like my

time back. I hated the original, too — hated it. I thought it was crap. I had dreams that this one would be better. Did you know that it had a \$10 million budget? Not that I saw any of it.

When was the last time you were involved in a fight?

RALPHMALPH, MATTESON, ILLINOIS

Probably when I went after [Skid Row's] Sebastian Bach in about '89 for being a wise-ass on my stage. What did he do? Badmouthed my organization when the shoes on his feet were from my closet. Even his own band turned its back on him. Not to say anything bad about the guy. It's 13 years later. Perhaps he's different now.

Since you're the sexiest man alive, I was wondering if there are any female celebrities you have the hots for.

DHPATERAKIS

Fuck, yeah! [Laughs] There's a lot of them I would like to have had my opportunities to, you know... →

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★ JON BON JOVI

but that's my penance for being married. I never got to take advantage of my celebrity. Liz Hurley, Elle MacPherson, Caprice, Demi Moore . . . that's four off the top of my head who would rate high.

About "Living on a Prayer": Was there actually a Tommy, and did he really work on the docks?

MARYMARRY, JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

It was based on truth, but it wasn't as romantic. A kid I knew gave up an opportunity to play baseball in college on a scholarship because he got his girlfriend pregnant. He did the thing of valor. Fortunately, they're still together after all these years.

What happened to your hair after you cut it? Did you auction it off?

WBKOOI, LAS VEGAS

No. It's funny: I was 30 years old, and I was looking for a change in my life. I was as amused and amazed as anyone that CNN talked about it. Had I known I could have made a buck off it, damn it . . .

Is it true that your wife is a black belt in karate?

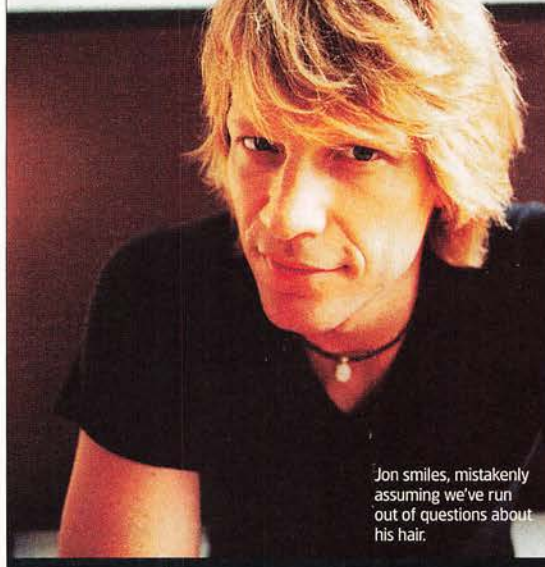
MCBIGDORK, NEW YORK

Yes. She has her own school — they call them "dojos." She competed both statewide and nationwide before we had kids. Does that mean she can kick my ass? Perhaps. I never want to find out.

Was it a big surprise when your manager, Doc McGhee, pleaded guilty to drug smuggling in 1988?

BIZACK, TAYLOR, TEXAS

Yes. [Long pause] I had no idea. It was shocking, and . . . Doc was ready to take his lumps all by himself, though. He did what he did, he



Jon smiles, mistakenly assuming we've run out of questions about his hair.



Bon Jovi's original rhythm section would find fame elsewhere.

apologized for it and he moved on with his life. I see him all the time. He was at my house July 4.

Who's your favorite Muppet?

NEUROTICA

Once when I was in London, I saw a Muppets TV show where there was, like, Jon Bon Muppet. I don't remember the characters, but it was a hoot. I should get it for my kids; I'd forgotten all about that.

Do you have any original paintings by Tico Torres, your drummer, hanging around the house?

OOGIE4EVR, TRENTON, NEW JERSEY

I do, several. And some of his ceramics. Tico's the grownup in the band. When he got sober and figured his life out, we went, "Wow, this guy's got a lot to say and do." We had no idea he was actually that good. Never went to school for it, just did it. And he does it very well.



Jon and "rug"

Does someone have to clean the Frampton Comes Alive-ish talk box that your guitarist, Richie Sambora, uses on "Living on a Prayer"?

ILLBILL, TAOS, NEW MEXICO

I imagine. But it ain't me! It's just a piece of hose with the edge cut off. So instead of cleaning it, maybe they just buy a new one.

Richie Sambora is married to Heather Locklear. Have you ever seen her naked?

YOQUIERO, HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA

No. No. Goddamn it.

Are you a good dancer?

FRIDAK, HUNTINGTON, NEW YORK

I am the whitest man in America. No rhythm whatsoever. If I were going to be a rapper, my name would be DW Toast — Dry White Toast. My father often questions if I'm his son, because he's a good dancer. My father goes out on the floor, man, he's Tony Manero.

Growing up in New Jersey, did you meet any Tony Soprano-type characters?

MISTERAL, MADISON, NEW JERSEY

Sure. I approached [Sopranos creator] David Chase and asked him to let me do an episode. He said, "Tell me why." I said, "I've played these bars, I know these people, this is my neighborhood." If you pull up to my father's house, it's Tony



Caprice models . . . not much.

Soprano's house. He's coming down the driveway picking up that paper.

When you appeared in an episode of Sex and the City, why didn't you have any chest hair?

WAYNER88, HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA

I did that during a bodybuilding period, where I was working out for a movie called *The Leading Man*. [Now] I have a rug on my back and chest. Shag carpet.

Do you think the band will just go on and on?

CHEVYTRUX, CARMEL, CALIFORNIA

On the last tour someone asked me that, and I said, "I guess we're beyond the point of breaking up." But now I'm wondering, could I be doing this, like [Mick] Jagger, 40 years on? Would I really want to be talking about another record and tour? My gut's telling me no. But I don't know what else I'm going to do, unless I make movies. Or take up gardening. [BLENDER]



You give mullets a bad name: Bon Jovi in 1983



Mr. and Mrs. Bon Jovi

"Can my wife kick my ass? I never want to find out."

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Any Last Requests?

"I want **Disturbed** to become the next Metallica!" thunders David Draiman, metal's motivational force of nature with the chin piercings and the terrifying stare. But what's with all this Old Testament chest-beating? And why no tattoos? "We are not clowns!" he tells a frightened *Blender*. . . .

BY NICK DUERDEN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PEROU



Disturbed, from
left: David Draiman,
Fuzz, Mike
Wengren, Dan
Donegan



ON DRAGON: SHIRT BY SLEDGE, PANTS BY SHINE,
SHOES BY BKR "BUNKER TEAM", SUNGLASSES BY
NIKE. ON FLUZZ: SHIRT BY WHGT, SHOES BY NEW
ROCK, SUNGLASSES BY REVO. ON WENGRIN: SHIRT
BY PRONTO UOMO, SHOES BY BKR "BUNKER
TEAM", SUNGLASSES BY NIKE. ON DONGHAI:
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SHIRT CUSTOM-MADE, SUNGLASSES BY SPEEDWAY

I

IMAGINE THAT the stage is a pulpit, and the lead singer is a preacher man in full-on preaching mode. Glowering, he walks to its edge, leaning dangerously close to the mosh pit, and tries to fully engage his congregation. But this 7,000-strong crowd of Swedish headbangers gathered at the Globe in

Stockholm is, for the most part, here to see nü-metal kings Korn, not their opening act, Disturbed.

Yet Disturbed's David Draiman is not easily discouraged. He commands the crowd to put its hands in the air, emphasizing his request by saying *fucking twice* and *motherfuckers* once. Most people comply, if only out of fear (Draiman can be terrifying). But he spots one girl who remains uninterested. When they make eye contact, she flips him the finger.

"Lucky for her I was in a good mood," he says after the show, chomping Bugs Bunny-style on an artichoke. "Otherwise I would have taken out my dick and pissed on her."

In a moment of rare levity, he bursts out laughing. With his bald head and brown eyes, he resembles Andre Agassi. The two steel tusks that jut from his bottom lip jangle together. But then the seething malevolence returns, his muscles ripple and the atmosphere turns cold. The man who looks like something out of a Stephen King novel walks into the Swedish night, looking for sex.

"These shows are very sexually charged," he explains. "It builds up inside you, and you have to have a release." He looks down toward his groin for a moment, then back up again. "And I'm not talking about your left hand." The chase, he says, is delectable, as is that electric first taste of a woman's kiss. "Women are our blessing," he solemnly intones, "and our curse."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DAVID DRAIMAN is not a tall man, but his platform shoes help some. Ideally, he says, he'd prefer to be well over six feet, but he has learned to make the most of his smaller stature. Born into an Orthodox Jewish family 29 years ago in Brooklyn, New York, he grew up in Chicago, chasing his longstanding dream to become a heavy-metal icon. That's why he shaved his head; that's why he put the tusks through his lip; that's why he pumps iron all day, dresses exclusively in black and wears fat-soled shoes.

"Every ounce of my soul and conviction is poured into this band," he says. He says this the way he says everything: slowly and methodically, the gravity of his tone freighting his words with monumental importance. Listening to him is like hearing God talk.

Draiman began playing music in his late teens, joining a succession of no-hope

"The majesty of metal is everything."

bands. After spending time unsuccessfully dabbling in funk-rock, he looked instead toward bands like Korn and Tool for inspiration. "I saw the intense beauty and intricacies of their pain and loss, and the cathartic nature of their music," he says. "I thought that I too could find meaning in metal."

He hooked up with the rest of Disturbed — Dan Donegan (guitar), Mike Wengren (drums) and the man they simply call Fuzz (bass) — in 1996, when the three placed an ad in a Chicago paper requesting the services of a lead singer. The four gelled quickly, but in a city that revered the Smashing Pumpkins, Disturbed remained a throwback to old-school metal and were primarily viewed as outsiders. This only increased Draiman's determination. As far as he was concerned, the world had always been against him. No one would ever readily embrace him.

"Everything in our lives has been a struggle," he says. "Anything we've gained, we've gained the hard way. We've seen less deserving bands succeed more quickly than us, and sometimes that can make you eat your heart out. But we've never had less than full, obsessive belief in our own capabilities."

In 2000, Disturbed released *The Sickness*, a mercilessly heavy debut infused with paranoia and executed with brute aggression. "That first album told how society deals with individuals, outsiders, those who are different," Draiman explains. "They put you in prison, put you in restraints, suppress your thoughts. It was all about re-empowering the individual and fighting back."

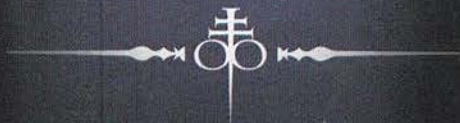
The following year, Disturbed toured as part of Ozzfest. Their apocalyptic metal attracted such a fervid fan base that midway through the tour, they were transferred from the second stage to the main stage. American metalheads had found their Tony Robbins, a motivational force of nature with multiple piercings. Here was heavy metal shorn of pantomime or freak-show kitsch. Instead, the music was serious and weighty, the lyrics full of religious imagery and a rather portentous call to arms. Fans lapped it up. Draiman was gradually attracting a flock of fiercely loyal disciples; *The Sickness* went on to sell more than 2 million copies.

Disturbed recently released the follow-up, *Believe*. This time, Draiman says, "the majesty of metal is everything. We have streamlined everything about us. This record represents the pure concept of one. One band, one sound, everything in harmony. Each title of each song on this record is one word. The title of the →

The only thing that can slow Disturbed down now: Draiman's chronic heartburn. Tums, Dave?



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record, one word. The name of the band, one word. One."

While *Believe* is marginally more accessible than its predecessor — the band allows melody into each song and gives it room to breathe — it doesn't offer much light relief. Take the lead single, "Prayer," for example. Over guitar chords that sound as though they've caught fire, Draiman's serrated voice spits: "Another dream that will never come true/Just to complement your sorrow/Another life that I've taken from you/A gift to add on to your pain and suffering."

"We are not clowns," he says, attempting to explain the misery that suffuses Disturbed's lyrics. "All due respect to those who choose to walk that path. If [other] bands can only find meaning by making themselves look like fools, fine. But that's not our way. I don't write from happiness; I write from extremes: extreme joy, extreme sadness."

Nevertheless, his lust for commercial acceptance is paramount. If many previously considered them "the largest underground metal band in the world," now Draiman wants to go mainstream.

"I want us to become the next Metallica, a metal U2," he says. "I want us to become a worldwide phenomenon. We'll do everything within our power to



How many fingers, Dave? Um... looks like four... no, five... no. Four. Definitely four.

achieve that, by any means necessary, maintaining our integrity and vision, our sense of purpose, and never bowing down to anyone."

So there.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

FOR THE MOST PART, Sweden appears to be a country of blond, golden, often astonishingly beautiful people. Here, obesity is not a problem, or crime or, it seems, poor health. Everyone radiates a natural vitality, as if each Swede has swallowed a little piece of sunshine.

The exception, in Stockholm at least, is the heavy-metal contingent. Disturbed and Korn are touring throughout Europe, and everywhere they go, teenagers with dyed black hair, tattoos, piercings and sullen expressions follow. A gaggle of female fans camped outside Disturbed's hotel resemble Cinderellas gone wrong in stained prom-queen dresses, torn stockings and Dr. Martens boots. They look as though they cry easily, as if the world doesn't understand them.

Draiman feels their pain.

"My teenage years were tumultuous, as is so common," he says. "What we have to go through during adolescence should never be trivialized. In many ways, it dictates the kind of people we become. I know; I speak from painful experience."

When he was 10, Draiman suffered the defining moment of his youth. His father, a businessman, was imprisoned for fraud.

"I can still vividly remember standing in front of the judge, crying, saying 'Please don't take my daddy away from me,'" he recounts, his big brown eyes filling with tears. "It was unimaginably traumatic. I was 10 years old, one of the most instrumental periods of a young man's life. It ruined adolescence for me, changed everything around me."

Convinced that David would lack discipline without his father around, Draiman's parents sent him to a series of tough, religious boarding schools for the next eight years. The schools granted him access to no books, magazines or television. Popular culture bypassed him completely, and he wasn't allowed to hang out with girls. From these hardships sprang Draiman's intrinsic need for rebellion, an urge to question everything. He went to Loyola University in Chicago to study political science, which made his family happy. But when he decided to follow his dream and become a singer — worse, a singer of heavy metal — they disowned him.

"It was particularly hard for my grandfather to accept me," he says. "I was the first-born grandchild, and in traditional Judaism, that's very important. I was meant to be the patriarch for the next generation, but here I was with steel tusks through my lips. He pronounced me dead, and wanted nothing further to do with me."

Once again, Draiman begins to cry.

His grandfather died last year, and his ghost haunts the new album. He and Draiman made peace shortly before his death, but it was an inconclusive accord, not entirely genuine. "He still couldn't accept me for who I was, but I refuse to accept me for who I was, but I refuse to be angry with him. I'm just sad at →



Mr. Draine needs his boots licked.

Pop Quiz!

Disturbed's **David Draine** ruminates over 16 of life's more troublesome dichotomies

Cats or dogs?

Dogs.

Korn or Limp Bizkit?

Korn.

Devil sign or middle finger?

Devil sign. No what matter the scenario, if you give me the finger, I'm gonna beat the shit out of you.

Cain or Abel?

Cain. You gotta go with the instigator.

Fake breasts or real?

Real. When they're beautiful and not hanging down to a woman's belly button, there's nothing greater — except the area I like to call "the saddle."

Dude or bro?

I tend to say *brother*.

Star Wars or The Lord of the Rings?

Star Wars.

Frogs or locusts?

Frogs. There's nothing inherently wrong with frogs, unless they're brought upon you in a plague. Locusts are bad no matter what.

Jenna Jameson or Pamela Anderson?

Both. And hopefully they'll play nice together.

'Shrooms or acid?

'Shrooms.

GNR's Appetite for Destruction or AC/DC's Back in Black?

Both are great, but *Appetite* is more memorable to me.

Cubs or White Sox?

Neither. I can't stand baseball unless I'm playing it.

Bert or Ernie?

Ernie. I always thought Bert was an asshole.

Puff Daddy or P. Diddy?

Puff Daddy. It's almost regal, and it has this pot-smoking connotation. P. Diddy sounds childish.

Passover or Yom Kippur?

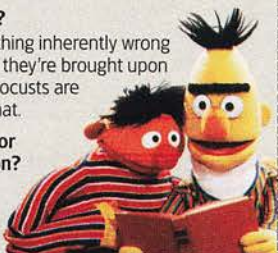
Passover. I can't stand fasting for 24 hours without drinking a drop of water.

Osbornes or Sopranos?

The Sopranos. It's the best show on TV. *The Osbornes* is disrespectful to the godfather of metal. I think Sharon should realize that. **ROB KEMP**

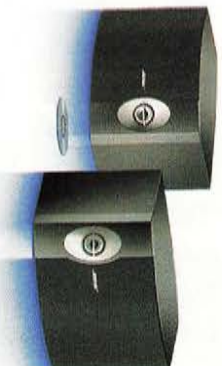


Jenna Jameson and the world's most fortunate chair



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Disturbed: "Sightseeing is for girls."

what we lost." He brings a hand up to his face and, momentarily, hides behind it.

Perhaps predictably, Draiman no longer practices Orthodox Judaism. But he does respect his roots: He won't eat non-kosher meat, and he refuses to get any tattoos, because his family owns a burial plot in Jerusalem. His great-grandfather and grandfather are buried there, and his father will be as well. If Draiman wants to earn his place alongside them — and he does — then he must not permanently mark his flesh.

"So no tattoos," he says. "That's the only rule I adhere to. I've broken all the others, so I'm not a good Jew. But I've had to follow my own path in life, one I felt necessary to take. I have no regrets."

TWENTY-FOUR HOURS later, Disturbed's lumbering tour bus pulls to a stop in Copenhagen, Denmark. The band squints in the harsh sunlight and staggers toward the hotel. Last night, they wanted to say goodbye to Sweden in style, and did so in a succession of bars.

"The women . . ." Draiman marvels. "Incredible. It was like visiting Hef's mansion. So much temptation."

In the lobby, he drapes himself inelegantly over a small chair, pops some pills into his mouth and swallows. "For my stomach," he says. Last year, he underwent surgery for a herniated valve. It was bathing his vocal cords in acid and rapidly destroying his voice — a condition generated by his various indulgences.

"Alcohol, drug abuse, the whole nine yards," he says. "I'm no longer a big drug user — the only drug I still partake of is marijuana — but I do like to drink. I'm of the belief that you should experience everything in life, simply because it is there for you to taste. You need to determine your own limitations, however, and sometimes the pursuit of this can be

taxing. There isn't a drug on the planet I haven't tried at least once. It helped me recognize my strengths and weaknesses."

Draiman took drugs in order to lose himself. Whenever he was sober, he felt depression swallowing him whole.

"When you're overcome with pain and life bites your ass on a daily basis, you just want oblivion. The person you're talking to today is completely different from a few years ago. I have gone through a furnace, because being human has been a constant struggle. But at this point in my life, I'm so far from depressed. Finally, I have found joy and inner peace."

Despite his newfound comfort, he continues to write songs that sound like the countdown to the apocalypse.

"I don't do frivolous," he says. "I write from a serious perspective. Even if I choose to write a love song, it won't concern puppy dogs and rainbows. Instead, I'll speak about how love moves the soul, about how being apart from your loved one tears you apart and about the pain

love can bring." He shakes his head.

"After something like 9/11, it has become obvious to everyone that we live in a turbulent, chaotic world with almost nothing to believe in. Our hopes are dashed, our dreams are destroyed, reality has come crashing down around us. I want to lead people toward finding hope through the purity and healing power of metal."

He doesn't smile when he says this.

DRAIMAN USED TO have a problem controlling his temper. Growing up isolated, spending much of his twenties as a self-styled outsider, meant his aggression was never far below the surface.

"Hopefully no one will ever see the berserker that lives within me anymore," he says. "I'm frightened when anybody brings me to that point, because I don't enjoy the sensation of my fist breaking bone. I don't like the way my body feels afterward: the shaking, the adrenaline pounding through my bloodstream. I don't like the feeling that I have caused somebody real pain."

These days, he's more settled. Happy, even. Disturbed, he's sure, are about to go supernova. Life is good; he's on speaking terms with his parents. He'd like a girl-

friend, a soul mate, but until he finds her, he's prepared to dive into the arms of beautiful women.

"But right now, love comes a distinct second to music," he says. "It's what I live for; it's my abiding addiction. I'm beginning to command genuine respect as a musician. From now on, when I walk into a room, I want people to take notice of me. I want them to stand to attention. It's what I deserve." [BLENDER]

"There isn't a drug on the planet I haven't tried at least once."

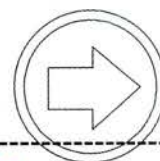
David decided to go with the black outfit. Again.



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THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

TORI AMOS

She's the feverishly adored piano goddess with a soft spot for porn actresses, *The Lord of the Rings* and "potion-induced journeys." And, she admits to *Blender*, if she were an ice-dancing judge, she'd be a damn good one. Hooray!

BY DORIAN LYNSEY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBERT MAXWELL



Teen Tori and her touchably soft hair

1 DON'T CALL HER MYRA ELLEN.
That's the name her mother and father gave her when she was born on August 22, 1963, in Newton, North Carolina. She changed it to Tori when she was 17. "My parents call me Tori Ellen," she says, "which is really lovely."

2 SHE'S THE DAUGHTER OF A PREACHER MAN.
"When I was growing up, my father was a minister, and he wanted to be like Billy Graham. In a way, preachers are performers — no different than rappers."

3 SHE'S PART CHEROKEE.
"I went to my grandfather's house in North Carolina most summers until I was 9 1/2, when he died," she recalls. "He and his wife were eastern Cherokee, and I grew up listening to their stories." Some of those stories found their way onto her new album, *Scarlet's Walk*.

4 SHE WAS HOMECOMING QUEEN IN HIGH SCHOOL, MUCH TO HER SURPRISE.
"Well, I can't claim it was *Carrie*,"

she says. "Although it would have been great. I never saw myself in the mirror as a young woman. I was just a musician who had one more hole than you do."

5 YOU HUM IT, SHE'LL PLAY IT. WELL, SHE USED TO, ANYWAY.
When she was 16, Amos played piano in a bar in Washington, D.C. "I had a repertoire of maybe 1,500 songs. I'd get a lot of show requests: 'Memory' from *Cats*, 'Don't Cry for Me Argentina.' I was a living jukebox."

6 THAT WAS AN EDUCATION IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE.
"Prostitutes would come into the bar and smoke or drink for a minute, and I would play them something. I've always felt protective of the Mary Magdalenes, the prostitutes, the porn B-movie actresses of the world. You begin to see that most people had a dream of themselves when they were younger, and at 27 or 28, it wasn't going how they had hoped. That was the place I realized that everybody has a story." →



HAIR BY ALEXANDER
MCQUEEN STYLING BY
TOM DUNN, JAMES FRANK
MAKEUP BY TONY
CHLOE

ESQ When I talk to people,
I'm always playing
something in my head.

7 TORI AMOS 1, SARAH JESSICA PARKER 0.

Amos beat out the then-unknown *Sex and the City* star for a role in a Cornflakes commercial in the early 1980s. "It makes me giggle to think about it," she says, laughing. "They needed a piano player. Could Sarah Jessica Parker play piano? No. I'm sure that was the only reason. It wasn't an acting phase. It was an 'I'm broke' phase."

8 "YOU CAN'T BE ASHAMED OF WHAT YOU'VE DONE."

That's her assessment of the self-titled 1988 album by her short-lived pop-metal band, Y Kant Tori Read. "It was a different time; I was in a different place. Everything was over the top — the high hair, everything. I was shopping at Retail Slut." If you ever hear the album, though, skip to "Cool on Your Island." She likes that one.

9 DON'T CHALLENGE HER TO A DUEL.

As seen on the cover of *Y Kant Tori Read*, Amos used to wield an old-fashioned saber. "I was taking lessons. I was really into the whole New Romantic lifestyle. Could I still handle it? I'd have to spend a long time brushing up."

10 USEFUL TIP #1: SECOND ALBUMS ARE HARD WORK.

After her autobiographical solo debut, 1992's *Little Earthquakes*, Amos had to raise her game. "You get to write your diary once, and then you have to become somebody who can write about characters and other people. You have to learn your craft; you have to get your toolbox out."

11 USEFUL TIP #2: SO IS DEALING WITH RECORD COMPANIES.

When Atlantic Records planned to

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I'd be a good ice-dancing judge.



Sarah Jessica Parker: "Spare a quarter for the bus?"



Kurt Cobain: the knees of a generation

bring in a new producer for 1994's *Under the Pink*, Amos threatened to burn her master tapes. "I find record companies usually try to change that thing in you that made people come in the first place. The relationship I had with [Atlantic] was quite strong, and whether we disagreed some of the time or not, there was passion there."

12 WHERE WAS SHE WHEN KURT COBAIN DIED? ON TOUR.

In Dublin, two days after the Nirvana frontman's 1994 suicide, her live version of "Smells Like Teen Spirit" was a choker. "I was just ready to start the chorus, and all of a sudden, in perfect pitch and very quietly, as only the Irish can do, [the audience] started singing it like a hymn. It was like they were sending his spirit off. It was an honor to play his music that night"

13 R.E.M.'S LEAD SINGER WANTS HER FANS.

"Michael Stipe said to me once, 'Hey, can I borrow your audience?' I said, 'You'll have to ask them.' I'm very lucky. Most of them, 98.9



"Goddamn, it can't be my turn to do the dishes again!"

Tori's pre-Spell Check debut



percent of them, would give you a ride, give you something to eat and you'd be fine. There's a mutual respect there."

15 SHE'S A COMIC-BOOK CHARACTER.

Well, kind of. In his cult series *Sandman*, Neil Gaiman based the character Delirium on Amos, particularly the eccentric way she speaks to others. "When I talk to people I'm always playing something in my head," Amos says, "so it sounds like there are a lot of stops and starts, because that's where the piano riff goes. I don't know how Neil was hearing it, but *Delirium* sounds very disjointed."

16 AMOS ON DRUGS: JUST SAY MAYBE.

"I'm not an addictive personality, and being a drug addict or alcoholic is just not me. I'd rather read a book. But I have taken journeys over the years that have been — how would you put it? — potion-induced."

17 AMOS'S 1996 ALBUM, BOYS FOR PELE, DOESN'T SPEND MUCH TIME ON HER STEREO.

"I was really in a bad way. I was finding out what I believed in. What was my ideology? What was the woman I wanted to be? What was sexy to me? What was exciting? I was breaking away from a lot of things and people, and they were breaking away from me as well. It was a low in my life." →



14

HER MUSICAL EDUCATION STARTED EARLY.

"I was a musician before I could talk. I had been nurtured to want to be a classical composer, although I loved contemporary pop: the Beatles, Elton & Bernie, Joni Mitchell, Laura Nyro, Stevie Wonder. I was 3 or 5. My brother was 10 years older, and he was bringing records home. Some of them he had to sneak in, like Jim Morrison."

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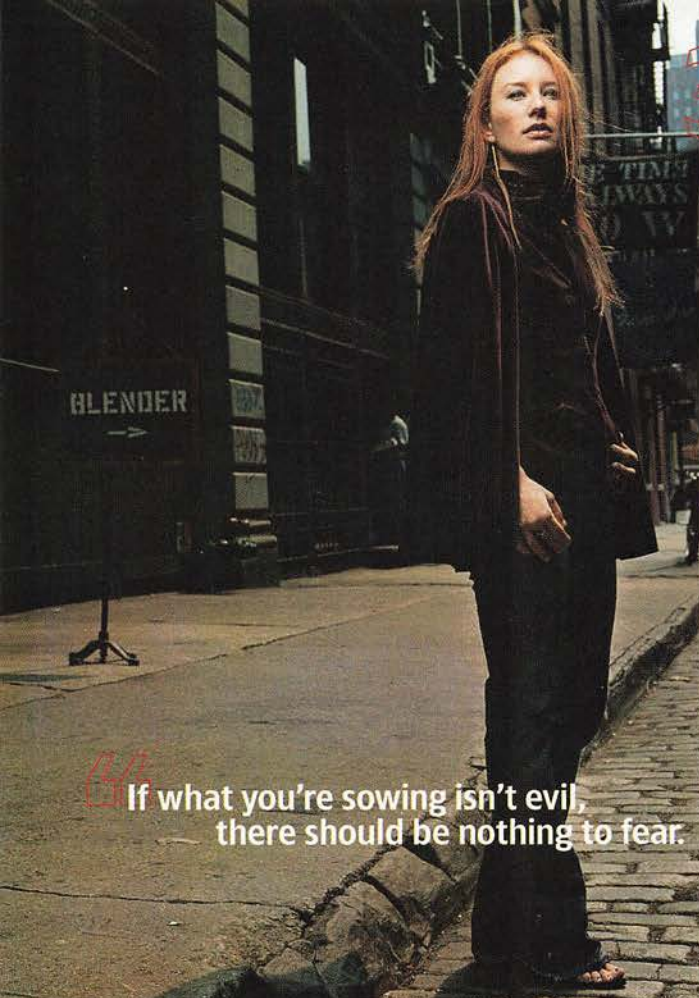
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18 AMOS PICKS HER PARTIES CAREFULLY.

"Where's the swinging thing happening? Where are the fun people? My God, it isn't backstage at the Grammys. I've had better parties on my crew's buses."

19 TOOL'S MAYNARD JAMES KEENAN IS "LIKE A BROTHER."

"It's always been that way," Amos says, glowing. "Whether it's a past life or something, we could have just been two ants struggling to get from one place to another — there is that familiarity you can't explain. You just feel comfortable."

20 SHE MET LUCIFER AND JESUS ONCE.

"I remember at the dinner table one night, my father said, 'I heard [Amos's song] "Father Lucifer," and it really kind of hurt me. I never saw myself as Father Lucifer.' I said, 'No, no, no! I wasn't talking about you! I was on an Ecstasy trip, Dad, and I had an affair with Lucifer and Jesus — so don't worry about it! He felt much better.'"

21 LAST YEAR'S COVERS ALBUM, *STRANGE LITTLE GIRLS*, LED TO SOME INTERESTING CONVERSATIONS.

"I'm open about some of them.



Top: Beans on toast; above: Maynard James Keenan onstage

22 PEOPLE THINK AMOS LIVES JUST LIKE HER CHARACTERS. SHE DOESN'T.

She has lived in Cornwall, England, for the last few years, but not because it's the mythological home of King Arthur's Round Table. "I think people think I'm in long dresses wafting around Dartmoor," she says. "My girlfriends laugh hysterically when they hear this, because they see it as sitting on the dock of the bay, drinking margaritas with our feet hanging on the water, listening to Marvin Gaye."

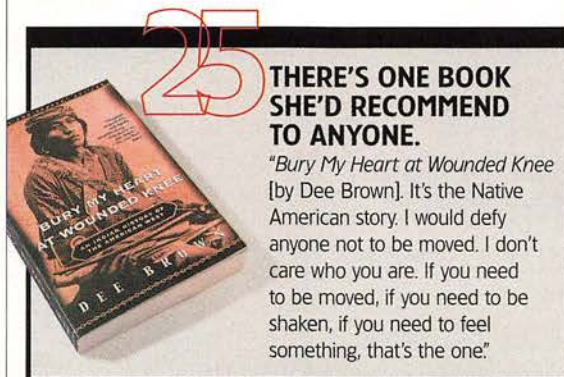


23 WHILE RECORDING *SCARLET'S WALK*, AMOS VISITED ALL 50 STATES. THE WORST MOMENT? THE KKK BARBECUE.

"I was coming into northwest Florida from Georgia, and there were Ku Klux Klansmen on the streets inviting people to a barbecue in broad daylight. That was pretty chilling."

24 LITTLE AMOS.

Amos and her husband, Mark Hawley, have a 2-year-old daughter, Natasha Lorien. The middle name comes from Lothlorien in *The Lord of the Rings*. "I thought that since the world is changing so quickly, it would be nice to give her the name of a place that doesn't change."



25 THERE'S ONE BOOK SHE'D RECOMMEND TO ANYONE.

"*Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* [by Dee Brown]. It's the Native American story. I would defy anyone not to be moved. I don't care who you are. If you need to be moved, if you need to be shaken, if you need to feel something, that's the one."

26 AMOS'S ONE ADDICTION: HELLO KITTY STICKERS.

"Natasha covers for me on this one. I can't buy them when I'm traveling alone."

27 IF YOU'RE BUYING THE DRINKS, SHE'LL HAVE A NICE BORDEAUX.

"We try to lay down a few bottles, but we've got a lot of people coming in and out all the time — so we do sometimes run through the stock."

28 SHE'S PICKED UP SOME BAD BRITISH HABITS...

"Watching the telly all the bloody time. The television should have a name in British households, because it's part of the family. There are some good British habits. Greasy breakfasts isn't one of them. Not every day. Beans on toast? Yuck."

29 ... AND SOME GOOD ONES.

"In America, it's work, work, work. The Brits want to get things done but they also have to have enjoyment — that thing called life."

30 TORI AMOS: A FUTURE ICE-DANCING JUDGE?

"I'd be a good ice-dancing judge because I think I'm fair," she remarks. "I'm not going to always vote for the person in the cutest costume. It's important to be fair, and a lot of judges can't be objective. That's the problem with these sports. I like justice."

31 AMOS TO GEORGE W. BUSH: "WHAT YOU SOW IS WHAT YOU REAP."

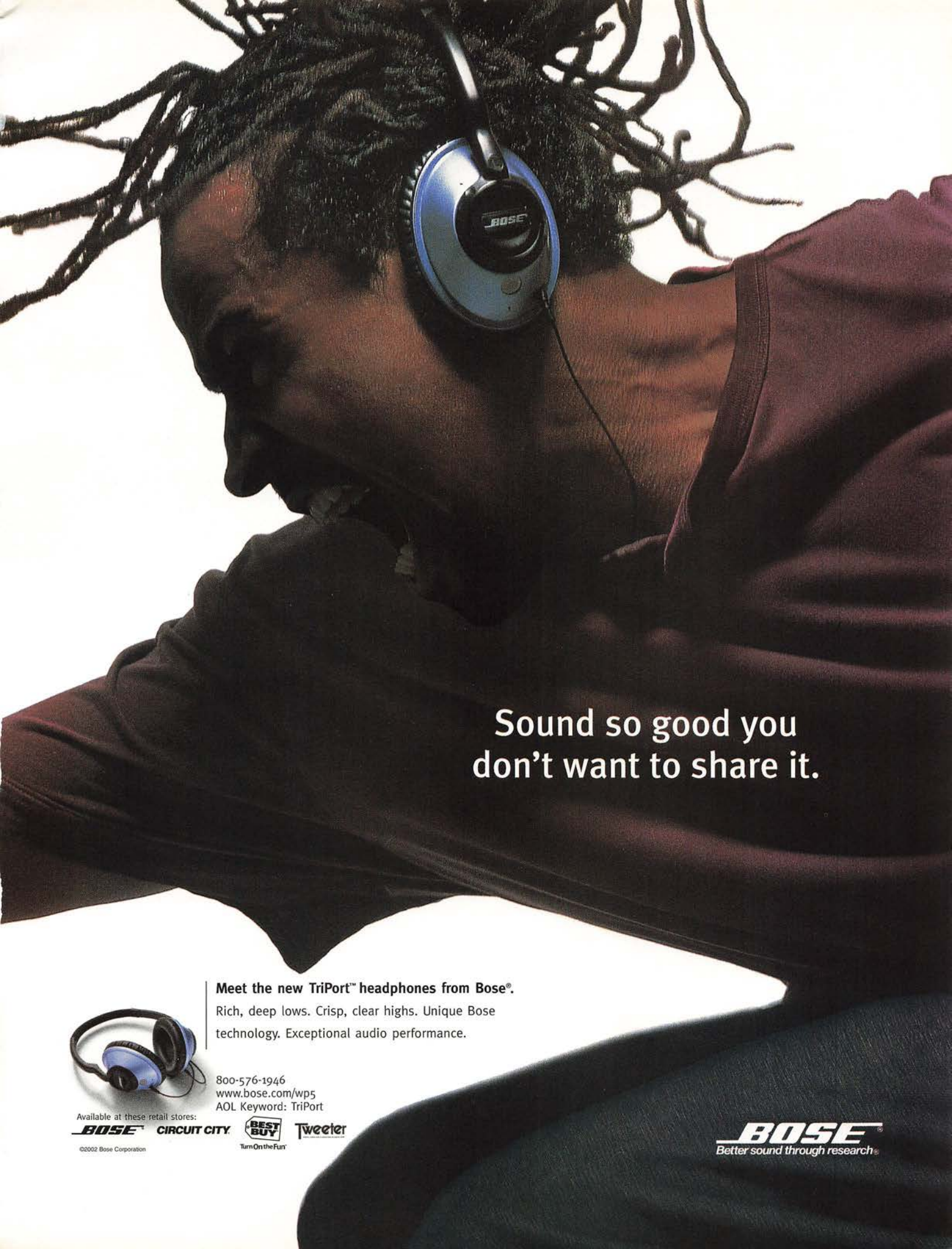
"As every good Christian knows, if what you're sowing isn't evil, then there should be nothing to fear," she says with a discreet smile.

32 AMOS TO PETER GABRIEL: THANKS FOR THE ADVICE.

"He said, 'Get your own studio. Because if you're having a rift with your record company, they have to call the owners of the studio to get the artist's masters.' That can come in quite handy."

33 TORI AT 38 TO TORI AT 18: DON'T WORRY.

"Some days you're gonna feel old when you're not so old, and some days you're gonna feel young when you're older. So don't jump off a bridge on the day when you're feeling old, because a week later or a year later, you're gonna feel young again." [BLENDER]



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4:31 PM

Outside San Francisco's Japan Center, from left: Maya Ford, Brett Anderson, Torry Castellano, Allison Robertson

Spend Our Cash!

→ The Band

The Donnas

→ The Mission

To spend \$848 in San Francisco any way they want

→ The Reason

Blender asked them to!



The Donnas: You'd never guess they're a rock band.

Cash Rules Everything Around Them!

Would glam-metal vixens **the Donnas** really blow \$848 of *Blender*'s cash on lip gloss, novelty CD holders and terrible concept albums? Yes!

BY CLARK COLLIS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHAPMAN BAEHLER

★ "HEY, THAT'S WHERE I saw human shit!" exclaims Brett Anderson, the lead singer of the Donnas, pointing at a seemingly innocuous street corner.

Welcome to San Francisco: home of Barry Bonds, Rice-a-Roni and, apparently, public sidewalk shitting. The city is also the home of the Donnas — or will be until tomorrow afternoon, when the four Ramones-loving young women depart for a 10-day tour of Europe to promote their new album, *The Donnas Spend the Night*, their major-label debut.

To prepare, the band sets off on a shopping expedition, which *Blender* has agreed to fund to the tune of \$848 — with the condition that we shadow them every step of the way. What better way to get the skinny on California's premier all-girl rock band?

The Donnas punctually gather at 4 P.M. outside the apartment of drummer Torry Castellano. Bassist Maya Ford

eagerly awaits the free-spending excursion. "When you take into account traveling and meetings and all that," she figures, "we get paid, like, 14 cents an hour."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

TWENTY MINUTES later, from inside the chauffeured S.U.V. *Blender* has provided, Anderson spots the street corner whose defilement she witnessed. Her anecdote prompts each Donna to attempt to out-gross the others, a competition won by guitarist Allison Robertson, who announces that she has left behind her "needles — and the used condom I was going to use again!"

Mercifully, the Donnas have exhausted their scatological repertoire by the time we arrive at the Japan Center, a shopping mecca in San Francisco's Japantown neighborhood.

"Stationery is so rock & roll," Ford, the band's quietest member, gnominically



Anderson interrupts her. "I thought JC was one of the more popular ones!"

To underscore their rock credentials, the Donnas amble over to the Guitar

"No," the drummer cracks, "Blender should do this every month . . . with us!" [PLENCE]

that was
asted.
ende;
s
ne
to?
cks, "Blen-
this every
th us!" [penned]

you may want it
the DOMINGO
the PIRELLA
March Jan 2002

HOTEL 27	105.00
PHONE 2000	80.47
TRANSPORT	27.0
FOOD 27	186.75
TOTAL US	6.00
CHRYSLER CENTER	228.00
WESLEY MUSIC	TOTAL: 688.22

WHY IS MICHAEL JACKSON WAVING AROUND THIS SIGN?

IS IT BECAUSE HE'S BROKE?



➤➤ Michael Jackson is more than \$200 million in debt. Could it be his financial troubles and the risk of losing his greatest asset — a half-share of the Beatles songbook — that are driving the superstar to alienate everyone, even his friends in the entertainment industry?

BY JOHN CONNOLLY

★ MICHAEL JACKSON, 43, stood on the upper level of an open-top sightseeing bus on July 6 and greeted his fans. They had gathered outside the Sony Music Building in midtown Manhattan to protest on his behalf. There were 150 of them. They had brought a sound system, banners and an array of homemade placards: PLEASE, SONY, STOP KILLING MUSIC, one read. INVINCIBLE IS UNBREAKABLE, said another. And TERMINATE TOMMY MOTTOLA. Passing drivers honked their horns.

It was a big day for Jackson. He had spent the morning in Harlem, where he had addressed supporters of the Reverend Al Sharpton's National Action Network. He had explained that the music industry was a racist conspiracy. "The recording companies," he said, "really, really do conspire against the artists. They steal,

they cheat, they do everything they can, [especially] against the black artists."

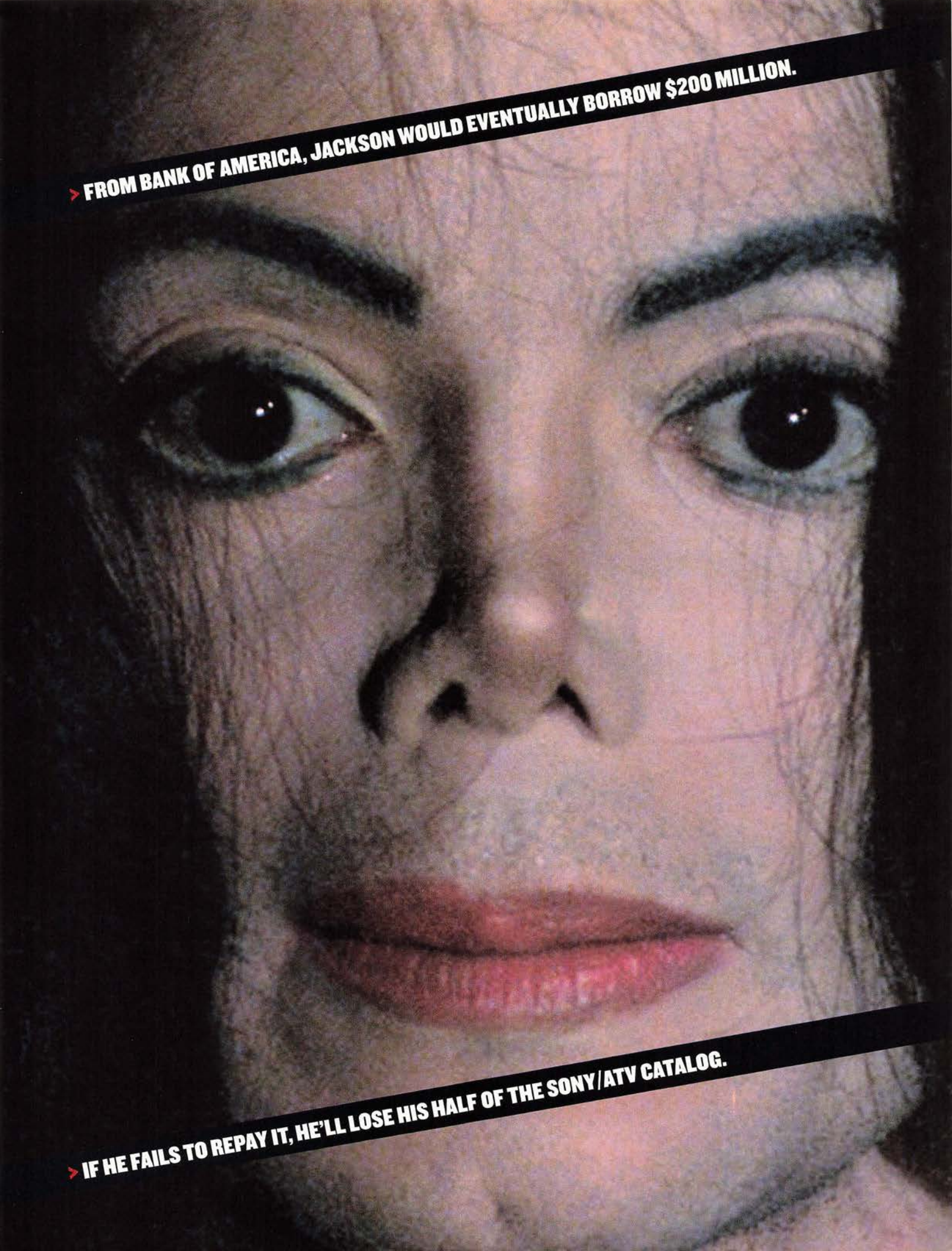
He had a few specific points to make from his own experience. Tommy Mottola, the chairman of Sony Music Entertainment, the company that funded every recording Jackson had made since *Dangerous*, was a "racist." He was mean, he was evil, he was "very, very devilish." He claimed Mottola had once referred to a Sony artist as a "fat, black nigger." He suggested that Sony had sabotaged the release of his latest album, *Invincible*.

Outside Sony's headquarters, Jackson leaned down from the top of his bus to select the placard he liked the most. It featured three pictures: a photograph of Jackson and two of Mottola. Across the top, in magic marker, was written THE GOOD, THE BAD and THE UGLY. Jackson was the Good. Mottola occupied the two other

slots, sporting devil horns in one of them. As the bus slowly circled the block, Jackson waved the flimsy sign above his head and joined his fans in their chant. "Down with Tommy Mottola!" he shouted. "Sony sucks! Sony sucks!"

★★★★★

IT HAS BEEN a long time since anyone expected conventional behavior from Michael Jackson. But throughout 20 years of accelerating eccentricities, freakish rumors and inexplicable weirdness, his public pronouncements have always been carefully managed. He may be a middle-aged man who prefers the company of prepubescent children, has a petting zoo in his home and was once infamous for sleeping in an oxygen tent. Attacking the head of his label, however, was unprecedented. It shocked those around →

A high-contrast, close-up portrait of Michael Jackson's face, showing his eyes, nose, and lips. The image has a grainy, high-contrast quality, with deep shadows and bright highlights. The background is dark, making the face the central focus.

> FROM BANK OF AMERICA, JACKSON WOULD EVENTUALLY BORROW \$200 MILLION.

> IF HE FAILS TO REPAY IT, HE'LL LOSE HIS HALF OF THE SONY/ATV CATALOG.

him, and for the first time in his career, Jackson succeeded in alienating even his associates in the entertainment industry.

Tommy Mottola is a tough-talking Bronx, New York, businessman, and he has been called many things. But labeling him a racist was a peculiar charge — particularly against a white man whose wife is Mexican, and who used to be married to Mariah Carey, who is part African-American.

Veteran pop manager Irving Azoff, who has known both Jackson and Mottola for decades, dismisses Jackson's accusation: "That's the dumbest fucking thing I've ever heard." Independent producer Jerry Greenberg, formerly the president of Jackson's MJJ Records, says, "With Tommy, it's all about the music. He wouldn't care if you were green or from Mars."

In the days after Jackson's speech, even Sharpton, a longtime friend of Mottola's, distanced himself from the allegations. The dispute gathered speed as the music industry and the media rushed in. A *Los Angeles Times* editorial suggested that Jackson was certainly old enough to take responsibility for his own failings; other pundits jeered Jackson's gall at demanding reparations for black artists after having apparently bleached his skin to an abnormal pallor. One observer joked about Jackson, "He's not a healthy woman."

Certainly, Jackson has medical problems. He became addicted to Demerol in 1993 following surgery related to scalp injuries he suffered in a pyrotechnics accident during the filming of a Pepsi ad in 1984. In late 1993, Jackson entered a rehabilitation clinic and was forced to cancel a series of concerts. In November 2001, members of Jackson's family flew to New York for an attempted intervention. He ordered his security team to thwart it. By July 2002, the *National Enquirer* reported that the singer was back on painkillers.

That same month, days after attacking Mottola, Jackson attended a lunch hosted by songwriter Denise Rich. One attendee remembers Jackson falling asleep at the table. "People would snap their fingers in front of his face to wake him up. At times he would shake it off and then tell an associate at the table, 'Write that down!' — but then he would slip away. It was very embarrassing for everyone who was at the table."

But there may be a simpler, more concrete explanation for Jackson's apparently reckless accusations against Mottola and Sony — an explanation that has nothing to do with either race or drugs, and everything to do with the fact

that he is deeply in debt. By July 2002, Michael Jackson owed his creditors at least \$200 million.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THE RELEASE OF *Invisible* was to have been Michael Jackson's triumphant comeback, his opportunity to reclaim his crown as the King of Pop. At the time, Tommy Mottola described it as "Michael's greatest work since *Thriller*."

Jackson was even more optimistic. "I know that this is going to be my biggest seller ever," he confided to a former manager of his. "I want it to sell 100 million copies."

It didn't. It sold just 6 million copies worldwide. In the U.S., it has sold only 2 million. Far from being the global smash he had hoped for, *Invisible* turned out to be the worst-selling new album Michael Jackson has made in 20 years. It was also the most expensive.



Jackson signs an agreement forming Sony/ATV Music Publishing with Sony Corp. of America President Michael P. Schulhof (left) and Tommy Mottola, the president of Sony Music Entertainment, 1995.



Jackson confers with the Reverend Al Sharpton, July 19

Over the three years it took to make, *Invisible* cost Sony roughly \$51 million. Half of this figure was Jackson's advance; the other half was spent to promote the product. In the music business, artists are advanced the money for both of these expenditures. They are then contractually

obligated to eventually pay back their label once their revenues from album sales begin coming in. But, as had become clear by last July, Sony would never be able to recoup *Invisible*'s costs. Jackson would thus have reason to fear that the company would be less enthusiastic to pay out similar sums for his next album. This has led industry insiders to speculate that Jackson's outburst was an attempt to get himself effectively fired from Sony and free to negotiate a new contract elsewhere.

Others whispered that the war of words wasn't about Jackson's debts but about his most precious financial holding: the Sony/ATV music publishing catalog. Jackson and Sony each own 50 percent of the massive song collection, which includes 251 Beatles compositions. Jackson's share is worth an estimated \$350 million. It has been suggested that Sony wants Jackson's half so badly that it was prepared to deliberately ensure that *Invisible* failed. They wanted to increase the financial pressure on Jackson so he'd be forced to sell, because Sony knows the star isn't in debt to just it. In fact, Jackson has spent most of the last 20 years in a downward spiral toward abject financial ruin.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

MICHAEL JACKSON earns an enormous amount of money. His annual income is astonishing: somewhere between \$18 million and \$20 million. But this titanic sum is dwarfed by the amount he manages to spend every year: well over \$30 million, including punishing interest payments to various creditors. Jackson is in debt by as much as a quarter of a billion dollars.

Jackson has seemingly always felt any cost could be justified when it came to his work. In 1987, during his *Bad* tour, Jackson demanded the simultaneous availability of a bus, a jet and a helicopter to ferry him from one venue to the next. That way, he could choose the form of transport he felt like using from day to day.

"We made a ton of money on the *Bad* tour," says Frank DiLeo, who was Jackson's manager from 1984 to 1989. "But Michael was spending it as fast as he was making it. He would have private jets fly his friends, stars and just hangers-on to wherever we were performing." By the time the tour's final accounting was complete, it had actually cost Jackson money.

"I think he made \$40 million," DiLeo says, "but he probably spent \$40 million."

Throughout the 1980s, whenever he recorded, Jackson had three fully staffed studios available, so he could select the one that most suited his mood. And while his videos revolutionized the form, they've always been extravagantly expensive. The extended video Martin Scorsese directed for "Bad" in 1987 cost more than \$2 million. Today, Jackson's videos cost between \$4 million and \$5 million each.

And the spending has only gotten worse. For *Invincible*, he spent more recording each song — sometimes as much as \$300,000 — than most artists spend to make entire albums. During the sessions, he recorded an estimated 84 songs — at a rough cost of \$20 million — before whittling the track listing down to 16 for the final cut. Include his month-long stays in a \$10,000-a-night suite at New York's Four Seasons hotel, and it's clear how he has managed to accrue debt from his work alone.

But his private life is, if anything, even more costly. In 1988, Jackson bought Neverland, his ranch/fair-ground/petting zoo/homestead in Los Olivos, California, for \$17 million. He then spent \$9 million on various "improvements." After closing the deal, he thanked his lawyer, John Branca, by buying him a new Rolls-Royce.

The ranch's annual maintenance costs alone are huge. When Jackson has children visit him, they zip around the ranch on a toy train. They board it outside his mansion, from where it travels to the zoo, the rides and the movie theater. Inside the theater, the walls are lined with beds, where sick children can rest while they watch the screen.

"He has a video collection bigger than Blockbuster," says one frequent Neverland visitor. "I once saw him looking through a magazine and ordering almost everything he saw. 'I want that motorcycle. That bike. This. That.' One after another, he kept ordering. It was like one of those shows where the contestant has five minutes to run through a store and fill up as many shopping carts as possible. It was crazy."

In 1993, police investigated Jackson over allegations that he had molested a 13-year-old boy.

The investigation was dropped, but Jackson settled out of court a civil suit brought by the boy's family — for a sum reported to have been between \$15 million and \$24 million.

Total it up — the house, the rides, exotic pets that require constant care, family members who require financial

BUY! BUY! BUY!

How does an international superstar accrue debts of up to \$200 million? With spending like this. . .

Neverland, 1988 **\$26 MILLION**

HIStory promotional budget, including "Scream" video and 33-foot statues of himself in London, Prague, L.A. and other cities, 1995 **\$30 MILLION**

"Scream" video, 1995 **\$7 MILLION**

"You Rock My World" video, 2001 **\$4 MILLION**

Self-designed coat of arms, rendered in diamonds, 2001 **\$2.3 MILLION**

Staff of 50, each earning \$20,000 to \$100,000 annually **\$2 MILLION A YEAR**

David O. Selznick's 1939 Best Picture Oscar for *Gone With the Wind*, 1999 **\$1.5 MILLION**

Altering footage of his Thirtieth Anniversary Celebration to digitally darken his skin, 2001 **\$715,000**

After-hours shopping spree at London's Harrod's department store, 2000 **\$150,000**

Two diamond-encrusted bottles of V1, the world's most expensive perfume, 1999 **\$160,000**



The 33-foot-tall *HIStory* promotional statue



In full regalia for 1992's "Remember the Time" video



Fifteen auctioned celebrity puppets, 1998 **\$45,000 TO \$75,000**

Diamond necklace with monkeys owned by late Baroness Sandra di Portanova, 2000 **\$62,000**

Pet tiger, 2002 **\$35,000**

Kathrine Baumann minaudière handbags, wholesaling at \$2,500 each, for then-wife Lisa-Marie Presley, 1994 **\$7,500 TO \$15,000**

HMV Oxford Circus shopping spree in London with Macaulay Culkin, 2001 **\$2,200**



Jackson's \$26 million Neverland ranch

support, two divorces (from Lisa-Marie Presley and Debbie Rowe) — and Jackson's annual expenses come to about \$13 million. This sum excludes interest payments on all his outstanding loans, which add an estimated \$18 million to \$22 million a year.

"WE MADE A TON OF MONEY, BUT MICHAEL WAS SPENDING IT AS FAST AS HE WAS MAKING IT."

"Michael was always taking advances and spending like there was no end to the money," DiLeo, his former manager, says. "He believed the next album would be bigger than the last."

He was almost always wrong. In fact, Jackson's enormous advances from Sony

became inversely proportional to his dwindling sales. In 1987, Sony floated Jackson a \$5 million advance for *Bad*, which sold 8 million copies; in 1992, \$10 million for *Dangerous*, which sold 7 million; in 1995, \$25 million for the half-new, half-hits collection *HIStory: Past, Present and Future*, which sold 7 million; and, in 1997, \$5 million for several new tracks on the remix compilation *Blood on the Dance Floor*, which sold a dismal 1 million copies.

In most businesses, employer and employee would have faced up to such diminishing returns with either a severe belt-tightening or more drastic measures. Yet even after *Invincible*, a 6 million-selling album with a \$25 million advance, →

★ MICHAEL JACKSON

Jackson still clings to the belief that he can sell 100 million copies of an album.

"*Thriller* was huge," says longtime music journalist Gene Santoro. "At the time, it was the biggest seller in history. But it might have been the bubble in Jackson's career, and he didn't realize it then, or now."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THRILLER IS NOT ONLY Jackson's biggest hit by a long shot; it's one of the most astronomical smashes in music history. Released in 1982, the album yielded an astounding seven hit singles and reinvented the concept of music videos. After its release, Jackson sensed its value and renegotiated his contract to bring him a royalty of about \$1.70 for each record sold. Of that, 30 cents would be split between his manager, DiLeo; his superstar producer, Quincy Jones; and the rest of his burgeoning staff. The other \$1.40 was his. Worldwide sales of 47 million copies of *Thriller* have earned Jackson roughly \$66 million.

But it didn't take long for him to squander his fortune. In 1987, he made one of the worst business and creative decisions of his career. He fired Quincy Jones, the goose who delivered his three golden eggs: *Off the Wall* (1979), *Thriller* and *Bad*. After the release of *Bad*, Jones apparently wanted a bigger cut of the royalties, and Jackson, believing his own press releases, told DiLeo, "We don't need him." DiLeo warned that his next album might not do as well without Jones's touch. "Don't say that!" shouted Jackson. "It's got to sell 100 million!" He fired Jones anyway. Two years later, he got rid of DiLeo too. His sales haven't been nearly as high since.

Despite these blunders, Jackson has been astute on at least two significant occasions. The first, post-*Thriller*, was demanding a contract with a "favored nations" clause, stipulating that the company match his royalty rate to the highest of that of any other recording artist at the label (among them Bruce Springsteen, Billy Joel and Barbra Streisand).

Jackson's other canny move was to snap up the Beatles' catalog. In 1984, after Jackson had collaborated on Paul McCartney's hit single "Say Say Say" and contributed to his album *Pipes of Peace*, McCartney confided that there was money to be made from owning the Beatles' publishing rights. McCartney explained that he planned to buy the rights from their then-owner, Australian financier Robert Holmes à Court.



Jackson shows off his Grammy Award to Quincy Jones, Los Angeles, 1984

As soon as he could, Jackson called his lawyer, John Branca. Although McCartney and other investors were chasing the catalog, Jackson had the muscle and the money — \$47.5 million — to grab it for himself.

If Jackson had been content

publisher, composer or producer is welcome to take advantage of our royalty/residual advancement service. No questions asked." Royalty Advance's owner, Parviz Omidvar, confirms that his company loaned Jackson money in 2001.

Somehow, even today, Jackson's fame sometimes trumps his astonishing credit history; there's still apparently no shortage of investors willing

to try to capitalize on his name. Recently, Jackson attached himself to a filmmaking

project with a Canadian company, to be called Neverland Pictures. It was funded with \$15 million to \$20 million raised from private investors; when the deal collapsed, Jackson walked away with several million dollars.

A more high-profile Jackson investor was Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, a Saudi Arabian worth an estimated \$20 billion. (Bin Talal gained notoriety in 2001 after cutting a \$10 million check to assist victims of the September 11 attacks, which New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani refused after the prince criticized U.S. foreign policy.)

Jackson replaced his manager, Sandy Gallin, with bin Talal's financial adviser, Tarak Ben Ammar, in 1996.

"Jackson has historically not handled his money well," Ben Ammar said at the time. "That's why he wants us in his life."

In 1997, Ben Ammar helped launch a plan to open family amusement parks around the world, with Jackson serving as figurehead — regardless of the notoriety the star had gained from his out-of-court settlement of the child-molestation suit. The plan collapsed. Nevertheless, bin Talal continued pumping cash into Jackson's overseas *HIStory* tour, which cost nearly \$1 million per show. But within a year, the prince gave up and →

"I ONCE SAW HIM LOOKING THROUGH A MAGAZINE AND ORDERING ALMOST EVERYTHING HE SAW."

to retire then and live even a moderately luxurious life, he could still be living comfortably off the Beatles proceeds. But by 1998, Jackson was in such a deep financial hole that he approached businessman Charles Koppelman about raising money by selling bonds to investors based on his songs' future earnings — as David Bowie had first done in 1997.

Jackson didn't do the bond deal; instead, Myung-Ho Lee, Jackson's then-new financial manager, went to the Bank of America for a \$140 million loan, using Jackson's half of the Sony/ATV catalog as collateral. On three occasions, the singer would borrow money — an amount totaling approximately \$200 million. If he



With Paul McCartney, 1982

Somewhere in a city of 7 million
is the man who killed your father,
the man who knows why and the
woman who may be your only
chance at finding them.



Shenmue II™

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Gambling
Violence

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withdrew his support. "Jackson's ideas for theme parks and other things," Ben Ammar says today, "were not realistic."

★★★★★

IN THE WAKE OF Jackson's outburst in July, there have been many theories about what he might be up to. Many industry insiders viewed his attack on Mottola as simply self-serving — jumping on the bandwagon of artists such as Prince, George Michael and Courtney Love, who have complained about unfair contracts. Al Sharpton insists that Jackson was sincerely calling for diversity in the industry's executive offices.

Others suggest that by playing the race card, Jackson might simply be hoping to pressure Sony to renegotiate his contract. Or perhaps he feels he can squeeze the company to offer an inflated price for his half of the Sony/ATV catalog.

But even a forced catalog sale couldn't improve Jackson's financial position



With Saudi Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, Paris, March 1996

significantly. Moreover, Jackson has proved loath to part with it, as it's worth far more to him than it ever will be to Sony. Because with his future earning power now so seriously damaged, his part-ownership of the Sony/ATV catalog is his only remaining lure to investors — be they Saudi princes, Beverly Hills loan firms or the Bank of America.

"Whenever Michael needed more money," one Jackson associate says, "he would tell one of his flunkies, 'Just get it!' And to do that, they would once again have to borrow more, using the catalog as collateral."

In the meantime, Michael Jackson's debts keep mounting, and there seems to be little sign of him facing the the reality of his financial situation.

In May 2002, he contacted John Branca and asked him to approach Sony Music with a deal. It was about the company's share of the catalog. Jackson didn't want to sell his share, it was explained — not at all. He wanted to buy Sony's share. And not for the \$350 million at which his half-share was valued — but for the altogether more stratospheric price of \$500 million. Where the ruined King of Pop might have found such a sum, nobody knows. Nor will they ever find out. Sony never even bothered to respond to his offer. [BLENDER]



A 13-year-old Michael Jackson plays basketball in Encino, California.

MICHAEL JACKSON >>>>

His life in CDs →



GOT TO BE THERE

MOTOWN, 1971

☆☆☆

He still has a day job fronting the Jackson 5, but 13-year-old Michael has more potential than, say, Tito. He manfully grapples with "Ain't No Sunshine" and "You've Got a Friend" despite sporting an ill-advised flat cap on the record sleeve.



BEN

MOTOWN, 1972

☆☆

Oddly worldly. Ben was a rat, and the handsomely Afro'd Jackson sings a love song to him. More peculiar still, *Ben* serves notice that we might have a special talent on our hands.



MUSIC & ME

MOTOWN, 1973

★

Oh, dear. Never would the plaintive Jackson sound more bored, but his lack of interest is no surprise considering the dreadfully anodyne fare here — material barely enlivened by "Happy," from the *Lady Sings the Blues* soundtrack.



FOREVER, MICHAEL

MOTOWN, 1975

☆☆

Contractually obligated water-treading, but the pining "One Day in Your Life" is his first truly great effort. More importantly, his voice is beginning to lose its kiddie squeak. Minor stirrings of funkiness abound throughout.



OFF THE WALL

EPIC, 1979

★★★★★

Extraordinary. The Motown years suggested he was quite good, but this work of genius? He moves into songwriting and discovers Quincy Jones, and in the process becomes a seven-times-platinum musical visionary.



THRILLER

EPIC, 1982

★★★★★

Owww! Twenty-five million records sold — a million in Los Angeles alone — and seven tracks in the Top 10. *Thriller* makes even Eddie Van Halen and Vincent Price suddenly hip. The searing vocals on "Billie Jean" were recorded in just one take.



BAD

EPIC, 1987

★★★★

Less perfect than the two albums that immediately preceded it, but it includes the mighty "Smooth Criminal" and the splendidly overwrought "I Just Can't Stop Loving You." A mere five number 1 singles suggest that his talent is far from lost.



DANGEROUS

EPIC, 1992

★★★★

... And a warm hello to chief producer Teddy Riley, who returns R&B Michael to the street. Its intricacies still reveal more with each play. Probably the first and last record to feature both Heavy D and Slash.



HISTORY: PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE BOOK 1

EPIC, 1995

★★★★

One hits disc and, given away rather casually, a second CD of new material that presents a bitter Jackson ("They Don't Care About Us"). For the cataclysmic "Earth Song," though, all is forgiven.

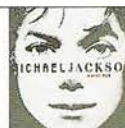


BLOOD ON THE DANCE FLOOR: HISTORY IN THE MIX

EPIC, 1997

☆☆

A pointless affair that still reached number 1. Five weak new songs — "Is It Scary" is as unimaginative as its title — and eight dreary remixes of *History* tracks with "B-side" written all over them.



INVINCIBLE

EPIC, 2001

★★★★

Twenty-two years after *Off the Wall*, the opener, "Unbreakable," still crackles merrily. Jackson still sounds surprisingly street, but he has lost his knack for penning a winning melody. His lyrical bitterness remains, though. JOHN AIZLEWOOD

stretch your imagination



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NO, IT ISN'T. IT CAN'T BE. IT IS! IT'S...



THE BEST SONG IN THE WORLD TO...

THE BEST SONG TO SOAK UP THE SUN TO

FLEETWOOD MAC, "GO YOUR OWN WAY"
FROM *RUMOURS*
(WARNER BROS., 1977)

BY SHERYL CROW

ROCK CHICK NONPAREIL, AMERICAN EXPRESS PITCHWOMAN

"I FIRST HEARD 'Go Your Own Way' in the summertime. Whenever I hear it, I think of



hanging out by the lakes in Missouri where I grew up and going waterskiing. It always makes me want to be outside doing something. It has an incredible energy."

... DROWN OUT THE SOUND OF YOUR PARENTS ARGUING

BLINK-182, "STAY TOGETHER FOR THE KIDS"
FROM *TAKE OFF YOUR PANTS AND JACKET*
(MCA, 2001)

BY TOM DeLONGE

GUITARIST-VOCALIST, BLINK-182

"I WANTED TO write a song about the saddest time in my life, which is the day my parents split up, when my family just crumbled. I knew there would be a good chance that 50 percent of the kids in America would relate to it. But my own family — you know what? It's weird — none of them said a thing!"



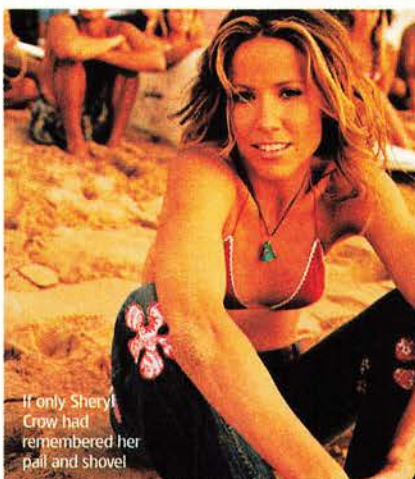
The rest of Blink-182 dread Tom DeLonge's "crazy days."

... INCREASE YOUR AVERAGE MILK YIELD

SIMON AND GARFUNKEL
"BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATER"

FROM *BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATER* (COLUMBIA, 1970)

THAT'S RIGHT! Just treat your herd of cows to repeated listens of S&G's classic ballad, and they'll produce up to 3 percent more milk, according to a study last year at Britain's Leicester University.



If only Sheryl Crow had remembered her pail and shovel

... STUMBLE UPON AT A GARAGE SALE

TONY SHERIDAN AND THE BEAT BROTHERS
"MY BONNIE," FROM *BEATLES BOP: HAMBURG DAYS*
(BEAR FAMILY, 2001)

BY TIM NEELY

EDITOR OF *GOLDMINE* MAGAZINE,
THE RECORD COLLECTOR'S BIBLE

"'MY BONNIE' IS widely considered the rarest rock single in the world. In early 1962, a guy from Neenah, Wisconsin, bought two copies of the record for 79 cents. Two years ago, he sold one copy for \$10,000 and the other for \$15,000. The Beat Brothers, in fact, is a pseudonym for a certain Liverpudlian band called the Beatles. It's highly unlikely that some copies are languishing in an attic, but you never know."



... ADD BASS TO

THE WHITE STRIPES
"DEAD LEAVES AND THE DIRTY GROUND"
FROM *WHITE BLOOD CELLS*
(THIRD MAN! V2, 2001)

BY STEVEN McDONALD

FORMERLY OF REDD KROSS, WHO SUPPLIES
BASS LINES TO WHITE STRIPES SONGS ON
REDDKROSS.COM

"THE WHITE STRIPES' aesthetic is simple, spontaneous. They embrace imperfections. So when I added bass to their songs, I didn't set out to 'improve' them. It's just really fun to play along with [drummer] Meg [White]. With bass, 'Dead Leaves' turns into a dark, heavy Black Sabbath song. And it's fun to be in Black Sabbath for the afternoon!"

...GET A PARTY STARTED!

>> AND 19 OTHER TUNES TO FIT EVERY OCCASION!

Pink: "Hey, making the devil sign is harder than it looks!"

... GET A PARTY STARTED

KYLIE MINOGUE
"CAN'T GET YOU OUT OF MY HEAD," FROM *FEVER*
(CAPITOL, 2002)

BY PINK

MILLION-SELLING PARTY-STARTING PROFESSIONAL

"THERE ARE TOO many great songs to get the party started to — Prince has a million of 'em! For hip-hop, my favorite is 2Pac's 'California Love.' But for a dance song, it's 'Can't Get You Out of My Head,' for sure. That's the one I love to dance to right now — we love us some Kylie. She's cute as hell, and she's really tiny. I'm tall compared to her. I don't believe that she had butt implants, though."

... SING AT KARAOKE NIGHT EVEN IF YOU'RE TONE-DEAF

PATSY CLINE, "CRAZY," FROM *12 GREATEST HITS*
(MCA, 1988)

BY PETER PARKER

PUBLISHER, *KARAOKE SCENE* MAGAZINE

"IT'S A GREAT choice because it's relatively easy to sing, it's easy to recognize and it has endured since Willie Nelson wrote it in 1962. Almost every female artist has covered it. If you can't find 'Crazy,' karaoke libraries all over the world always carry more songs by Elvis Presley than any other artist. Singers who can't string three words together in English will get onstage and sing every word of an Elvis song in a perfect American accent."



Being Shakira's chiropractor sure does look like fun.

... DO THE TANGO TO

ASTOR PIAZZOLLA, "LIBERTANGO" FROM *LIBERTANGO*
(MILAN, 1997)

BY SHAKIRA

LATINA TEMPTRESS AND INFAMOUS RUMP SHAKER
(SEE THE "OBJECTION [TANGO]" VIDEO FOR DETAILS)

"BELLY DANCING IS the most sensual dance, but tango is one of the sexiest because it represents love, hatred, passion and romance. All these different emotions, all in one expression, are represented by one couple on the floor. All tango songs are beautiful, but this is the greatest song from the one true master." →

... GET A LAP DANCE TO

METALLICA, "SAD BUT TRUE," FROM *METALLICA* (ELEKTRA, 1991)

BY DAWN MARSHALL

DANCER AT SCORES GENTLEMEN'S CLUB, NEW YORK

"I USUALLY DANCE to hip-hop for a more fun vibe, but rock to get really sexy. The younger kids like Linkin Park or Papa Roach. For businessmen, Metallica is definitely the favorite. 'Sad but True' immediately turns a thirtysomething guy into a 15-year-old boy again. It's like their anthem. It's not slow; it's not fast. It's just sexy. And I dance very

sexy to it. The guys freak out, and I end up getting sooo much money. Guys love the whole naked chick-and-guitar thing. The 'sad but true' part doesn't seem to break the mood at all!"



It was a Jazzercise class no one would forget.



Chuck Berry searches for the man who cut off his tie.

... SEND INTO OUTER SPACE

CHUCK BERRY, "JOHNNY B. GOODE"

FROM *THE GREAT TWENTY-EIGHT* (CHESS, 1982)

CURRENTLY HURLING OUT of our solar system in the Voyager spacecraft as part of a disc containing sounds and images selected to show alien cultures what life is like on Earth. Which hardly seems like a fair exchange for all those anal probes.

... ILLEGALLY DOWNLOAD

OSYMYSO
"INTRO-INSPECTION" (2001)

BY FREELANCE HELLRAISER

DJ AND PREMIER INTERNET MIXMASTER

"THERE ARE LOTS of amazing bootlegs out there, but in terms of breaking technical boundaries, Osymyso takes the prize. He took a vote over the Internet to find out the 150 most memorable pop-song intros of all time. The answers ranged from Frank Sinatra to Kylie Minogue. He then blended them into a 12-minute track. Sometimes he's playing six intros at once. It's a masterpiece."

... HAVE HOT, SWEATY MONKEY SEX TO

NINE INCH NAILS, "CLOSER"
FROM *THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL* (NOTHING/INTERSCOPE, 1994)

BY TOMMY LEE

THE BIGGEST MAN IN ROCK

"COME ON, DUDE: 'I wanna fuck you like an animal'? That's the all-time fuck song. Those are pure fuck beats — Trent Reznor knew what he was doing. You can fuck to it, you can dance to it and you can break shit to it. Since I'm engaged now [to Mayte Garcia, Prince's ex-wife], I'll just say that the most memorable episode that I remember with 'Closer' took place on a swing."



C'mon, Tommy, it's not that big.

... SEPARATE REAL SINGERS FROM CRAPPY ONES

R. KELLY, "I BELIEVE I CAN FLY," FROM *R.* (JIVE, 1998)

BY SIMON COWELL

AMERICAN IDOL TALENT CZAR



"IF I REALLY want to challenge a singer, I pick 'I Believe I Can Fly.' It disturbed a lot of singers when they auditioned for *American Idol*. It sounds deceptively easy, but it's not. It's unbelievable how many people sang it in audition, and it's unbelievable how many fucked it up."

... WHIP A SPORTS CROWD INTO A FRENZY

GUNS N' ROSES, "WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE"
FROM *APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION* (Geffen, 1987)

BY IKE RICHMAN

VICE PRESIDENT OF P.R. FOR COMCAST-SPECTACOR, THE FIRM THAT OWNS THE PHILADELPHIA 76ERS AND FLYERS

"WE USUALLY PLAY Guns N' Roses' 'Welcome to the Jungle' between the third and fourth quarter of a Sixers game, about a minute and a half before the team starts playing again. With the very first beat of the intro, the crowd knows what's coming. And as that intro builds into the crescendo, the arena crowd are on their feet, losing their minds, going crazy. 'Welcome to the jungle, baby! You're going to diieee!' "

... PLAY AIR GUITAR TO

BLUR, "SONG 2"

FROM *BLUR* (FOOD/VIRGIN, 1997)

THERE'S NO BETTER tune, according to Zac "Mr. Magnet" Monro, whose "performance" of "Song 2" won him the 2001 Air Guitar World Championship. Monro's prize? An actual (if not quite in the spirit of the competition) Washburn guitar.



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THE BEST SONG IN THE WORLD TO...



Photo taken just before
DJ made the mistake
of replacing Lou Bega
with Sigur Rós

... PLAY AT A FUNERAL

**TERRY JACKS, "SEASONS IN THE SUN," FROM
HAVE A NICE DECADE: THE '70s POP CULTURE BOX**
(RHINO, 1998)

BY TERRY JACKS

"BACK IN THE early '70s, my best friend told me he had acute leukemia and was going to be dead in six months. I thought it must be awful for a young person to have tell his loved ones that he's going to die. So [original songwriter] Jacques Brel and I rewrote 'Seasons in the Sun' It's a farewell song: A relative will always send an article saying 'Seasons in the Sun' is hugely popular at funerals. I wouldn't want it or any other song played at my funeral, because I'm not going to have one. My ashes will be scattered at sea."



... MAKE YOU FEEL GOOD ABOUT GETTING DUMPED

**PUDDLE OF MUDD, "SHE HATES ME"
FROM COME CLEAN**
(FLAWLESS/INTERSCOPE, 2001)

BY WES SCANTLIN

**SINGER-SONWRITER,
PUDDLE OF MUDD**

"HERE'S THE STORY behind 'She Hates Me': I was seeing this girl six years ago. It was cool in the beginning, and then she stopped giving me any action. The whole relationship turned into a constant argument about petty bullshit. So one night, I wrote the line 'She fucking hates me' over and over. It was therapy! Sure, you feel like shit when you get dumped, but life goes on — and there are other fish in the sea.

"Come to think of it, that girl still hates my guts."



Wes Scantlin:
always happy
to give
directions

... GET EVERYONE DANCING AT A WEDDING

**LOU BEGA, "MAMBO NO. 5"
FROM A LITTLE BIT OF MAMBO**
(RCA, 1999)

BY CARL BENJAMIN

WEDDING DJ EXTRAORDINAIRE, CLEVELAND

"WHEN I REALLY want to reach the people, there's only one song I reach for: 'Mambo No. 5.' It's the *Mona Lisa* of wedding songs! It works like a charm. There'll be some poor bastard begging his date to leave, and then I put on 'Mambo No. 5,' and they're both out there getting down. And he's smiling his ass off! It has everything: catchy lyrics, a great dance beat and the word *mambo* in the title, which is really fun to say over the P.A. system. People go nuts!"



... HELP IMPROVE YOUR CUNNILINGUS TECHNIQUE

**KHIA, "MY BACK, MY NECK"
FROM THUG MISSES**
(ARTEMIS, 2002)

BY KHIA

SEXPERT RAPPER

"GUYS ARE ALWAYS telling girls what they want. Head in the truck, whatever. But guys need to know that it's more than just putting it in! They must take the long route. I wrote this song because enough was enough! Guys need to get it right. Some guys think if they have money and a car, they have it made. Oh, no! Those things don't matter at all if you don't know how to pleasure your woman."

... GET EVERYONE TO LEAVE THE PARTY >>

LOU REED, "METAL MACHINE MUSIC PART 1"

FROM METAL MACHINE MUSIC (BUDDHA, 1975)

THE KEG HAS been empty for hours and dawn is fast approaching. But still your guests refuse to unglue their butts from your sofa. Don't worry. Uncle Lou has the answer — all 16 utterly atonal, eardrum-battering, feedback-drenched instrumental minutes of it.

N E W
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"Hmm. Apparently blondes really
do have more fun, after all."

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They Make the Songs the Whole World Sings

N.E.R.D. are a "rock trio" whose tours are one long party. But two-thirds of them are also the Neptunes, the production team beloved of Britney, J.Lo, Jay-Z, Justin Timberlake and a host of other grateful stars. Where do they get all the energy? "Titty juice," they tell *Blender*

BY MICHAEL O'DELL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PATRICK HOELCK

Madame Tussaud, eat your heart out! N.E.R.D., from left: Chad Hugo, Pharrell Williams, Shay





GIVEN THAT THEY'VE traveled overnight to North Carolina all the way from New York, N.E.R.D. won't settle for anything less than a riot.

"You're letting event staff have it easy," N.E.R.D.'s Pharrell Williams tells the scrubbed, nervous teens filling the Verizon Wireless Amphitheatre in Charlotte. "You're told not to mosh, not to surf or show your titties. Do you always listen to rules?"

The fans consider this for a moment before deciding that perhaps they have been a little too accommodating. As N.E.R.D. unveil the funky squalor of "Lapdance," the crowd switches its collective brain to "rock" mode, and a mosh pit emerges. It's the little folks who pay the price: A few get to surf before being tossed aside like soda cans.

Finally, N.E.R.D. rapper Shay (Sheldon Hailey to his mom) sprays the crowd from his water bottle and throws it into the mob. The show ends without incident, but faster than you can say *correctional facilities*, two North Carolina police officers waddle backstage to investigate. Why? One fan has complained of getting wet.

"Shit! Trouble just follows me," Shay moans, confiding that he already faces a case in Virginia over a certain "nightclub incident." "I mean, don't these people know we're a rock band?"

Well, actually, no. N.E.R.D.'s album, *In Search Of...*, may have established Williams, 29, Shay, 28, and producer Chad Hugo, 29, as new rock contenders. But Williams and Hugo are far better known as production kingpins the Neptunes, the Virginia Beach-based sonic engine room driving contemporary hip-hop, R&B and pop.

In fact, the night before the Charlotte show, Williams attended the MTV Video Music Awards in New York City, where he performed alongside P. Diddy, Busta Rhymes and a phalanx of dancers tied to bungee cords. That took care of the hip-hop portfolio. Then 'N Sync star Justin Timberlake premiered music from his new solo album, *Justified*, more than half of which the Neptunes helped write and produce. Then came Clipse, the hip-hop duo signed by the Neptunes as the first act on their new Star Trak label. (Clipse's debut album, *Lord Willin'*, topped the charts the night of the awards.)

Add to all these a Neptunes production résumé that already includes no fewer than 20 platinum singles for Britney Spears, Jennifer Lopez, No →



Doubt, Limp Bizkit, Jay-Z and Usher, and it's easy to see why N.E.R.D.'s foray into rock is raising so many eyebrows.

★★★★★

WHEN THE NEPTUNES announced an in-house project back in 2000, most people expected an extension of their production work: an album of Jeep-quaking street beats. Instead, Williams and Hugo called Shay, a school friend from their Virginia Beach days, and decided to forge a link between their beloved hip-hop and the rock music they'd grown up with.

"I grew up listening to Stevie Wonder, A Tribe Called Quest, De La Soul, Queen, Steppenwolf," Williams says. "I don't want to lose that mix. I have the power to do what I like. I'd be a fool not to use it."

As if merely going rock wasn't willful enough by itself, N.E.R.D. recorded *In Search Of* . . . in the studio and released it in Europe before deciding to scrap it and start all over with a live band, Spymob, a

Then and now, from left: Sheldon Hailey, 9 months, Pharrell Williams, 2 years, Chad Hugo, 5 months



jammy rock outfit that had been dropped by Epic Records and had returned to Minneapolis to drink beer and punch walls.

"We were in bad shape. Then Pharrell called and said he loved our music," Spymob drummer Eric Fawcett says, shrugging. "Here's a guy who knows what he likes and doesn't give a fuck what anyone else thinks. Luckily he's got a bank account to back it up."

So N.E.R.D.'s missionary work continues. Atlanta is the next stop on the 15-city Sprite Liquid Mix tour, which includes Hoobastank, 311, Nappy Roots

and Jay-Z, and N.E.R.D. are traveling in style. Their tour bus ("I don't rent; I bought it!" Williams exults) could be more aptly called a P. Diddy video with 16 wheels and a truck engine bolted on. Inside, *Blender* needs to hold a hand up to deflect the glare of bling: \$500,000 worth of monogrammed carpets, disco lights in the bathrooms, a mirrored ceiling with fairy lights . . . and, in the back, a studio where Williams is currently tooling beats for J.Lo and Busta Rhymes.

"Don't get any mud on my carpet," Williams warns, sounding like Grandma.

He has invited *Blender* onboard to talk, but there's a delay: N.E.R.D.'s crew has brought along a selection of North Carolina maidens, apparently vetted for silicone implantation. A party with a half-empty bottle of vodka at the center is in progress. There's an air of quaint high-school-prom trepidation as everyone wonders what to do next.

"We're good girls," says one of the maidens. "We just want to party a little."

Williams sits between two of them and pulls their arms around his neck like two ends of a scarf. The party falls silent.

He turns to *Blender*. "OK," he says. "Let's talk."

★★★★★

CHAD HUGO IS a dedicated family man and Shay is a member only of N.E.R.D., so Pharrell Williams is the public face of both N.E.R.D. and the Neptunes. He and Shay were childhood friends and fellow hip-hop fans. Williams met Hugo, meanwhile, at an after-school program in 1989; the pair became friends after discovering they were both in marching bands.

"'Bonita Applebum,'"

Williams says. "That's the record that started us. We wanted to be A Tribe Called Quest."

In 1991, Williams, Hugo and Hailey entered a local talent contest. They didn't win, but a

friend of producer Teddy Riley, who had a studio in Virginia Beach, was present and passed on their information.

Riley showed particular interest in Williams, and within weeks, he and Hugo were signed to Future Recordings as the Neptunes. Williams's first assignment was to write a verse for "Rump Shaker," which became a huge hit for Wreckx-N-Effect. By the next year, he was producing Blackstreet's "Tonight's the Night."

"We got these Future Recordings jackets, and I wore mine to school,"

Williams says with a laugh. "I'm telling you, you got to fuck every girl in school with one of those. Don't forget, Teddy was making Michael Jackson's *Dangerous* at the time. He was God."

Williams won't say why he eventually parted company with Riley, but he frequently talks about the problem of

young talent being forced to do uncredited production work.

"I resolve never to do that," he says. "It happens all over. A kid comes in and puts dope shit on a track. The boss comes in and adds a high hat and takes a credit. I'm not saying that happened to me, but . . . young talent gets crushed."

So in 1996, he and Hugo struck out on their own and began forging a reputation for hard beats. Their first big hit was Noreaga's "Superthug"; Ol' Dirty Bastard's "Got Your Money" followed soon after. As the hits came, a common theme emerged: The Neptunes' special talent was creating music for pop's female pinups. Britney, Gwen Stefani, Toni Braxton, J.Lo and Kelis . . . they've all left the Neptunes' Virginia compound touched by the magic.

"The Neptunes can put a street flava on anyone, and it works," says fellow Virginian Missy "Misdemeanor" Elliott.



Williams, 19, with his gold record for Wreckx-N-Effect's "Rump Shaker," 1992

"I listen to a Britney record now, and I'm feeling it."

"You want to know if I get to fuck 'em all, right?" Williams asks. "That would be a great clause in the contract, wouldn't it? I would be the luckiest motherfucker alive. But the answer is no. It's about tapping into their personalities. Someone

like Britney — you see a cheerleader. But I see a girl who feels the street. She's growing into someone so musically powerful. She's sick! Her music is fucking retarded!"

But for Williams, pop's limitations are all too evident. Currently he's listening to the Strokes and the White Stripes, and working on the next N.E.R.D. album.

"If I have an unfulfilled dream, it's Shakira!" he says, beaming. "She's the total package. Absolutely . . . the total package."

**"The Neptunes
can put a street flava
on anyone.
And it works."**

"Mmm . . . that ass," Shay offers, sounding solemnly respectful.

★★★★★

THE NEXT MORNING, the doors of the N.E.R.D. bus swish open. The crowd outside gathers around, clamoring for the "Nip-toons." We're in Georgia. At Atlanta's Hi-Fi Buys Amphitheatre, Shay and Williams do a radio interview. The mood is relaxed to the point of stupid.

"What do you drink?" asks the DJ.

"Titty juice," Shay responds.

A discussion ensues about the merits of large and small breasts. Women who have had five children but still reveal their "saggy titties" at N.E.R.D. shows are singled out for special condemnation.

Perhaps because of the steady rain, N.E.R.D.'s set is more subdued today. Even so, Williams once again tells the audience where he wants it to stand, and what kind of screaming and shouting would suit him best. It works. The macabre brooding of the cocaine fable "Provider" and the virulent anti-poser, anti-fame rant "Rock Star" stir Atlanta from its sleepy indifference.

Backstage after the show, Williams tends to a world that clearly reflects his star status. First, he sidles up to a new friend: a tall, willowy model. If the relationship is to flourish, he'll need to conduct it from a stepladder.

Then a teen in a bandanna who has sneaked aboard the tour bus takes his chance. In a faltering voice, he says he wants to break into the music business. Would Williams and Shay like to hear him freestyle right now?

Williams declines politely but firmly, inviting him to send a demo to Star Trak. The kid is clearly in awe, and his voice is hoarse as he bids us goodbye.

It's a painful moment, showing the Neptunes' street status as well as the legion of hopefuls wanting to take their place. Williams and Shay are summoned to a car; Beyoncé Knowles of Destiny's Child has requested their presence at a party at a nearby skating rink.

Shay returns early. "I don't really go for those celebrity things," he explains. "They're full of big egos and brown-nosing bullshit."

By the time the bus starts heading northwest to St. Louis, *Blender* is asleep, thrashing in a bunk and whinnying at the smell of Shay's sneakers. When we arrive in the city at daybreak, two things become immediately clear:

1. A glance through the smoked glass reveals far more mullets per capita in St. Louis than in Atlanta.

2. Pharrell Williams's bed has not been slept in. [BLENDER]

The Most Disastrous

No one likes to remind others of their greatest failures. Well, except us. That's why *Blender* has uncovered the stories behind the most career-crippling albums of all time — with expert opinions provided by the folks who made 'em!

BY CLARK COLLIS

★ MOBY

ANIMAL RIGHTS

ELEKTRA, 1996



BEFORE Moby's 1991 single "Go" sold a million copies, and the one-man-techno-band's reputation as a critic's darling was cemented with his 1995

album, *Everything Is Wrong*.

"HOPE YOU LIKE MY NEW DIRECTION!"

Abandoning electronica, Moby adopted an abrasive hard-rock style for *Animal Rights* — a reaction, he said, to his mother's recent death from lung cancer. Word of mouth was so poor that at one stop on a British promotional tour, only two journalists wanted to talk to him. "That's why I refuse to complain when I find myself doing a lot of interviews," he said later. "The alternative to doing a lot of interviews is doing none." The album sold a miserable 90,000 copies.

AFTER In 1998, Moby parted ways with Elektra and struggled to get a new deal ("No one was particularly interested"). He signed to V2 after label execs heard the soon-to-be-multiplatinum *Play*.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED? "Did I think I'd screwed up my career? Not really," Moby says today. "My expectations for my career have always been low. I would love to do another album that's so different."

"My expectations for my career have always been low."

VEGAN METAL!

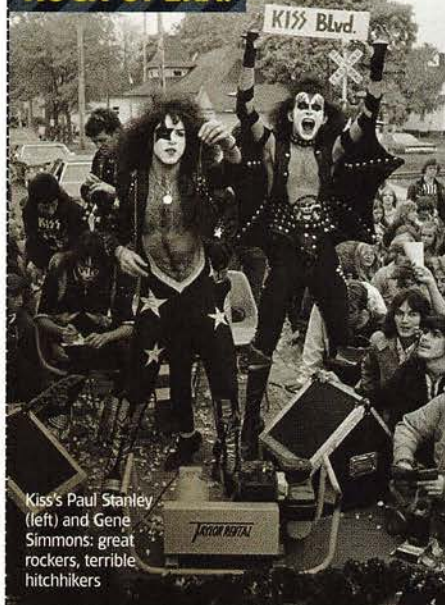


Moby: "And I'm telling you the sock does need to be this long!"

Albums of All Time



ROCK OPERA!



Kiss's Paul Stanley (left) and Gene Simmons: great rockers, terrible hitchhikers

★ KISS

[MUSIC FROM] THE ELDER

POLYGRAM, 1981

BEFORE A massive concert draw in the mid- to late '70s, the masked glam-rock quartet went platinum with 1976's *Rock and Roll Over* and two 1977 smashes: *Love Gun* and *KISS Alive II*.

"HOPE YOU LIKE OUR NEW DIRECTION!" Kiss leader Gene Simmons created the concept for *The Elder*. "A line stuck in my mind: 'When the Earth was very young, they were already old.' I conceived a race of immortal, energy-based beings." As guitarist Paul Stanley later put it, "We've done a lot of 'fuck me, suck me' songs, and we thought we might like to go a slightly different way."



The \$2 million album was produced with limited contributions from drug-addled guitarist Ace Frehley, who refused to leave his house. When PolyGram personnel heard the finished product, they were, according to C.K. Lendt, Kiss's then-business manager, "stunned into silence. Only in their wildest nightmare would Kiss deliver a pseudo-rock opera with choirs and symphony orchestras." It peaked at number 75.

AFTER Their next album, *Creatures of the Night*, also flopped. They decided to remove their makeup for 1983's *Lick It Up*, which became their first platinum album in four years.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED? "Some critics did appreciate that a lot of effort had been put into it," Lendt says, "but *The Elder* was totally unmarketable."

★ THE HAPPY MONDAYS

YES PLEASE!

FACTORY/ELEKTRA, 1992

BEFORE The leading lights of Britain's Ecstasy-fueled "Madchester" scene, the Happy Mondays' 1990 album, *Pills 'N' Thrills & Bellyaches*, was a groundbreaking fusion of rock and electronica.

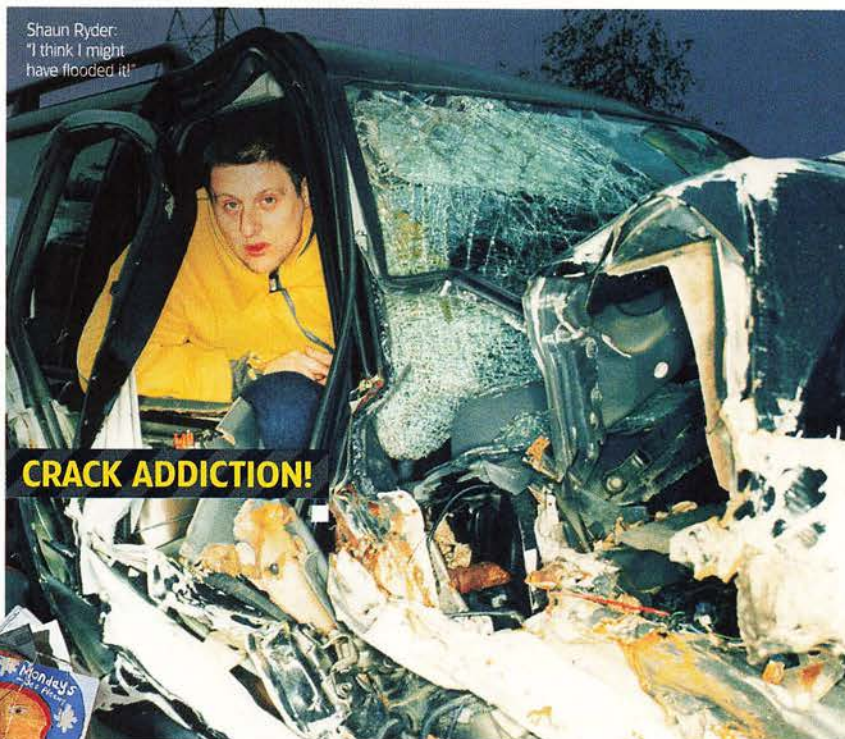
"HOPE YOU LIKE OUR NEW DIRECTION!"

In an attempt to get lead singer Shaun Ryder off heroin, Factory Records chief Tony Wilson agreed to let the Mondays record *Pills* follow-up in purportedly smack-free Barbados. "Nobody told us that while there is no smack there, it is the center for crack cocaine on the American continent," Wilson said.

Ryder and his brother Paul, the Mondays' bassist, both developed crack habits; Shaun was soon smoking up to 50 rocks a day. "Then they began selling their clothes," Wilson says. Eventually Shaun was caught trying to steal the studio's couches. The eventual commercial failure of *Yes Please!* led directly to Factory's demise.

AFTER Legend has it that at a meeting to negotiate a new record contract for the

Shaun Ryder:
"I think I might
have flooded it!"

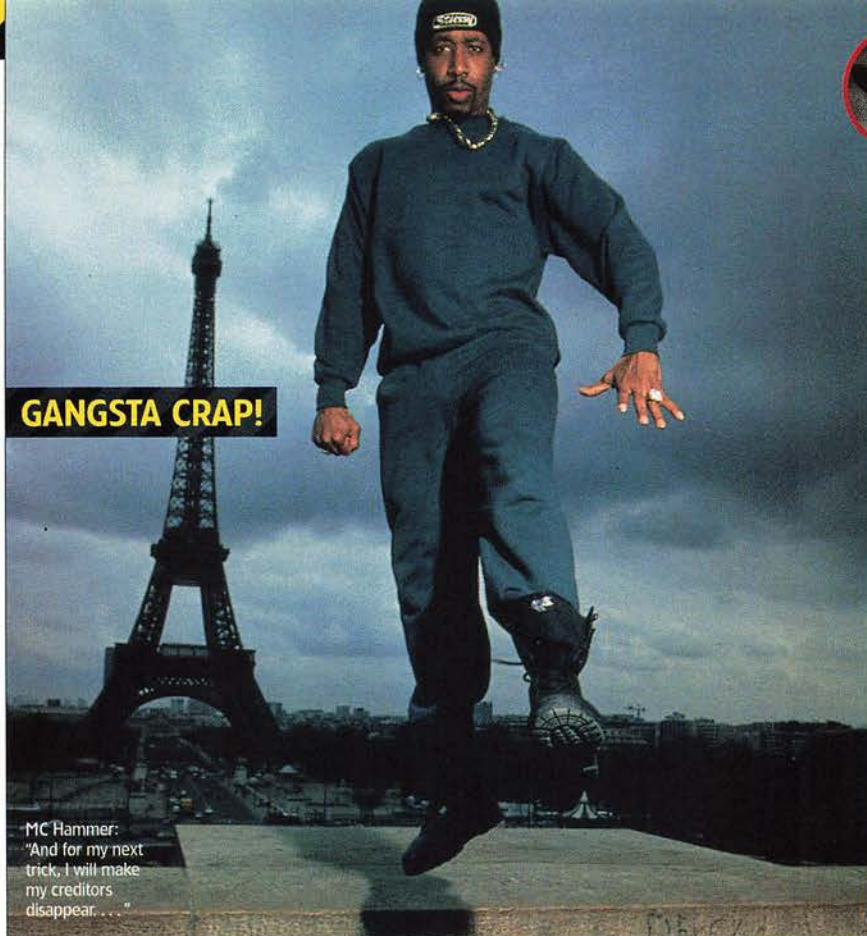


CRACK ADDICTION!



Happy Mondays, Shaun Ryder left to go get some "Kentucky Fried Chicken" — the band's slang term for heroin — and never returned. *Yes Please!* would be the band's final record.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED? "Cocaine is loads of fun for weekends," Wilson says. "Loads of fun to have sex on, big party drug — all for it. But it's the last thing on God's earth you should ever work on." →



GANGSTA CRAP!

MC Hammer:
"And for my next
trick, I will make
my creditors
disappear...."

★ MC HAMMER

THE FUNKY HEADHUNTER

GIANT, 1994



BEFORE Hammer, the rapper with the voluminous pants, sold 10 million copies of his sophomore album, 1990's *Please Hammer Don't Hurt*

'Em, to become hip-hop's first superstar. He celebrated by splurging on a Boeing 727, 17 cars and a \$7 million mansion in Oakland, California. He also employed many friends from his childhood neighborhood in Oakland, some of whom did nothing but stand onstage.

"HOPE YOU LIKE MY NEW DIRECTION!" After 1991's *Too Legit to Quit* sold a disappointing 3 million copies, Hammer decided to reinvent himself as a gangsta rapper for *The Funky Headhunter*, exchanging his goofy pants for sagging black jeans and a knitted cap — or, in the video for "Pumps and a Bump," a grotesquely well-filled Speedo.

"It's definitely more extreme," he said of *Headhunter*. "It's a harder Hammer!" Unfortunately, the rapper's gangsta conversion fooled few, while such lyrics as "Step right up and be the

next contestant/A Tribe Called Quest is a bad investment!" were simply embarrassing. Although certified platinum, *The Funky Headhunter* peaked at an unimpressive number 12.

AFTER In 1996, Hammer filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection to avoid \$10 million in debt. "Ninety percent of the people I extended a helping hand to didn't appreciate it," he moaned. Recently, he's appeared in ads for the Freshstart Network, a firm that helps indigents file for bankruptcy.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED? "By going 180 degrees away from what made him famous, he ended up looking foolish," says C.K. Lendt. "Now, unfortunately, he's kind of an industry joke."

OUR DISTINGUISHED MASTERS OF DISASTER



MOBY Hugely successful electronica kingpin who floundered mightily with 1996's vegan-friendly *Animal Rights*.

MARK TULIN Bassist with 1960s psychedelic-rock outfit the Electric Prunes, the band responsible for *Mass in F Minor* — all of whose lyrics, tragically, are in Latin.

C.K. LENDT Former business manager for Kiss; author of *KISS and Sell: The Making of a Supergroup*.



TONY WILSON The founder of Manchester, England's Factory Records, which released the Happy Mondays' career-killing *Yes Please!* in 1992.



SCHIZO!

Garth Brooks.
Or is it...?
Yes, it is.

★ GARTH BROOKS

IN THE LIFE OF CHRIS GAINES

CAPITOL NASHVILLE, 1999



BEFORE Brooks, a country crossover phenom, sold a staggering 89 million albums from 1990 to 1999.

"HOPE YOU LIKE MY NEW DIRECTION!" In 1999, Brooks announced his intention to record a "greatest hits" package of material culled from seven fictitious records by Australian pop star Chris Gaines. "Chris is not my alter ego," Brooks explained. "He is a character in an upcoming film. He is a fictitious pop-rock legend who changed music for the '90s." Sadly, "Gaines" was also someone whose records few Brooks fans were eager to buy, despite an estimated \$15 million publicity campaign.

Just two months after the album's release, Capitol Nashville offered a \$3 discount to retailers if they lowered its price. "We're not selling enough units," said company president Pat Quigley. They never did.

AFTER The film based on Gaines's life was never made. The Gaines "phenomenon" quickly petered out.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

"Yeah, that's a biggie," Moby says, laughing. →



"He is a fictitious pop-rock legend who changed music."



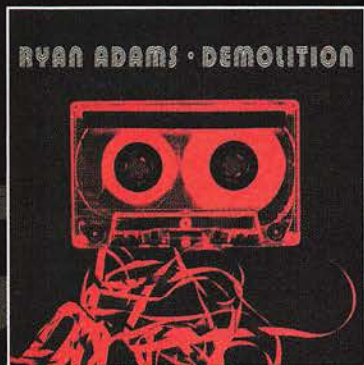
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Nice finish.

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THE MOST DISASTROUS ALBUMS OF ALL TIME!

★ FLEETWOOD MAC

TUSK

WARNER BROS., 1979



BEFORE In 1977, Fleetwood Mac became soft-rock royalty with *Rumours*, which sold 8 million copies in its first year alone.

“HOPE YOU LIKE OUR NEW DIRECTION!” “I remember someone saying, ‘God, you must be scared shitless! How are you going to follow up *Rumours*?’” guitarist Lindsey Buckingham recalled. His answer was to seek inspiration from new-wave acts such as the Clash and Talking Heads.

When Warner Bros. heard *Tusk*, “a lot of people saw their Christmas bonuses flying out the window,” Buckingham said. Priced at \$16, a lot of money in 1979, the double album failed to come close to *Rumours*’ success. “Six months [after *Tusk* came out],” Buckingham added, “[drummer] Mick [Fleetwood] said, ‘You blew it.’”



OVERPRICED!

Stevie Nicks: “Let me introduce my fiancé. . . .”

AFTER The Mac recovered some commercial ground with their next record, 1982’s *Mirage*, but would never match *Rumours*’ sales.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED? “It’s part of musicians’ job description to follow idiosyncratic flights of fancy,” Moby says. “Like the Beatles’ ‘Revolution #9’ or Lou Reed’s *Metal Machine Music*. Not that people rushed out to buy that, either.”

★ THE ELECTRIC PRUNES

MASS IN F MINOR

COLLECTOR’S CHOICE MUSIC, 1968

BEFORE The Los Angeles-based psychedelic rockers scored two early Top 40 hits, including “I Had Too Much to Dream (Last Night),” before garnering critical acclaim for their second album, 1967’s *Underground*.



LATIN LYRICS!

OK, we see the electricity. Where are the prunes?

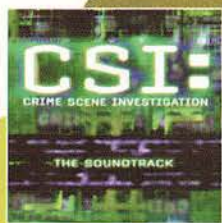
“HOPE YOU LIKE OUR NEW DIRECTION!”

To help boost visibility and sales, the Prunes’ manager commissioned arranger David Axelrod to write an album of material combining classical music and lyrics in Latin with the band’s customary psychedelic freak-outs (remember, it was the ’60s).

While *Mass in F Minor*’s opening track, “Kyrie Eleison,” appeared on the *Easy Rider* soundtrack, the album was not a commercial success, and its debut performance was farcical. “We missed the intro on the first song, and it never got any better,” Prunes bassist Mark Tulin says. “Everyone was in a general state of confusion. I made my way over to the four cello and four French horns and told them to ‘jam in E.’”

AFTER According to Tulin, *Mass in F Minor* was the Electric Prunes’ “death knell,” and their ensuing tour “possibly the worst of all time.” By 1969, every original Prune had left, and the group’s name was later dropped altogether.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED? “That album stupefied us for 35 years,” Tulin says. →



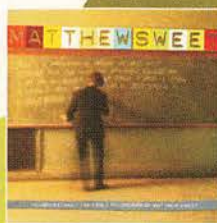
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BOOZE BURNOUT!

★ PETER FRAMPTON

I'M IN YOU

A&M, 1977

BEFORE The ex-Humble Pie singer (and his talking guitar) became an American idol with 1976's *Frampton Comes Alive*, which spawned three Top 20 singles and sold 17 million copies.

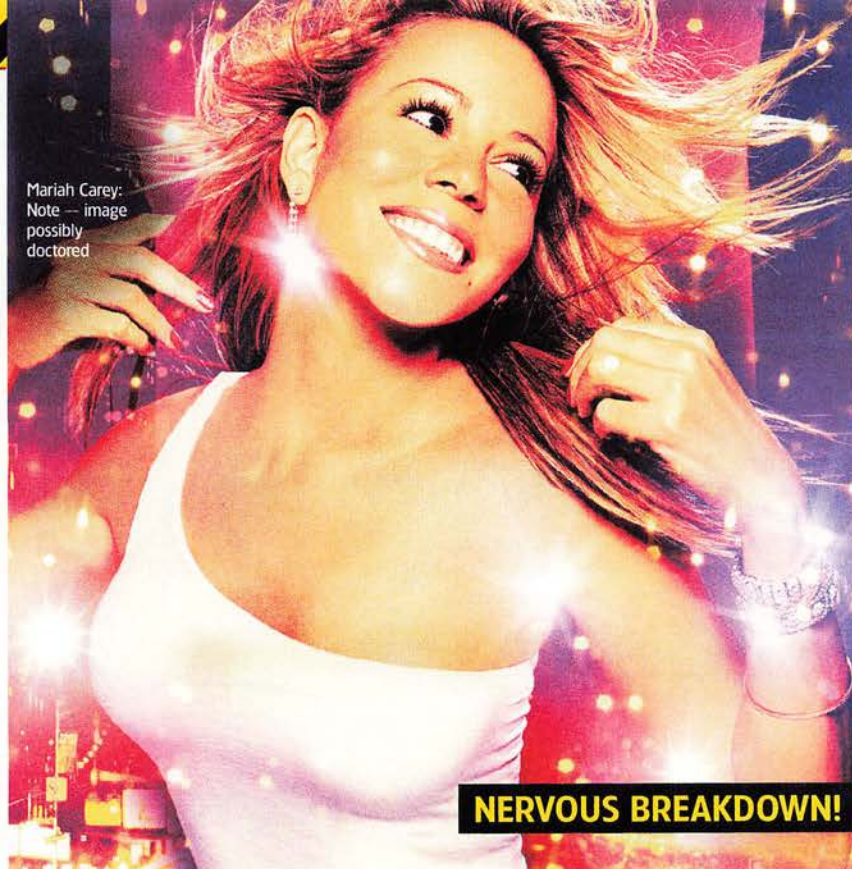
"HOPE YOU LIKE MY NEW DIRECTION!" Startled to learn that *Alive*'s unrecorded follow-up already had advance orders of 3 million, Frampton took a powder to Mexico . . . and promptly lost his entire collection of song demos.

His manager, Dee Anthony, nevertheless insisted that the exhausted and heavily drinking Frampton enter the studio immediately. But *Alive* had fatally overexposed him, and *I'm in You*, which included a song about his dog, was a critical and commercial flop. "We sold 3 million copies," one Frampton associate later said, "and they probably took back 2 million. It was a failure."

AFTER By 1982, Frampton's career had collapsed so completely that his album *Art of Control* peaked at a miserable number 174, and A&M dropped its onetime biggest star soon after.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED? "Having made the 'great' album can have a strange effect on musicians," says Factory Records' Tony Wilson. "Maybe it makes the musician think too much about the marketplace, too much about the consumer. Or maybe he can afford too much of the drugs he shouldn't be taking."

"We sold 3 million copies. They probably took back 2 million."



Mariah Carey:
Note — image
possibly
doctored

NERVOUS BREAKDOWN!

The Most Disastrous Album Ever!

★ MARIAH CAREY

GLITTER

VIRGIN, 2001

BEFORE The diva of the '90s, the pre-*Glitter* Carey sold 140 million albums and singles. In 2001, she signed a four-album deal with Virgin worth an estimated \$80 million.

"HOPE YOU LIKE MY NEW DIRECTION!" That contract first bore fruit with *Glitter*, the '80s-style soundtrack to the film of the same name in which Carey starred. But before either came out, the singer began to unravel. In July 2001, Carey appeared on MTV's *Total Request Live*, read a note from her mother to host Carson Daly and prevented him from cutting to com-

mercial. She later wrote on her Web site: "If anybody gets this that really cares, just do me a favor, close down the management company that I own . . . I need a break."

Later that day, Carey checked herself into Silver Hill, a "recovery clinic" in New Canaan, Connecticut, for what her management called an "emotional and physical breakdown." She canceled all her promotional plans, and *Glitter*'s release date was delayed until September 11, 2001 — the worst day in history to release anything.

The \$22 million film, which the *Village Voice* called "infinitely mockable," grossed a meager \$5 million. The album also sold well below expectations, and Virgin-EMI chief Ken Berry was fired soon after.

AFTER Virgin dropped Carey at the beginning of 2002, but in addition to the \$21 million she was paid for *Glitter*, she received another \$28 million in severance pay for her troubles. This past May, Island Def Jam announced it had signed Carey; her new CD will come out in December.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED? "On a quantitative level, you can make the case for it being the most disastrous album of all time," Moby says. "It makes the idea of the Sex Pistols being paid £30,000 to leave EMI [in 1977] look like child's play." [BLENDER]



Mariah Carey: "Spare \$49 million for a cup of joe?"

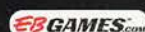
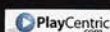
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Those X-ray-
vision goggles
weren't a waste of
money after all.

Grown Up All Right!

When she was a teenager, her dad claimed 70 percent of her earnings, her record label tried to swindle her out of \$2 million. But that's all over now. With a new album, a new look and a new attitude, **LeAnn Rimes** is proud to declare, "It's all on my shoulders."

BY WILLIAM SHAW
PHOTOGRAPHY BY FRANK OCKENFELS 3

LOCAL COUTURE
TOP: FRANK OCKENFELS
JEWELRY: B. B. B. B.
SHIRT: B. B. B. B.
LORENZO L.A.

AT AGE 11, she recorded her first album.

At 13, she released her first multi-platinum CD, *Blue*.

At 14, having sold 12 million copies of her first three albums, the little girl with the big voice became the first country singer to win a Best New Artist Grammy — and the youngest to win the Best Country Vocal award.

At 16, her single “How Do I Live” set a record by spending 69 continuous weeks on the *Billboard* Hot 100.

Outwardly, everything appeared just about perfect.

Then, in 2000, when she was 17, the immaculately lip-glossed world of LeAnn Rimes turned ugly.

That was the year the Texas songbird sued her daddy.

That May, she brought a lawsuit against her father, Wilbur Rimes (who was also her producer and manager), and his Dallas business partner Lyle Walker, accusing them of “gross mismanagement.” She claimed they had stolen at least \$7 million from her by levying outrageously inflated management and production fees. Her suit demanded that Walker and her father repay every cent they had earned from her career before she was 16 — somewhere around \$14 million.

Wilbur, a former oil-drilling supply salesman, countersued. In his affidavit, he accused his daughter of acting “like a spoiled brat.”

In November, having turned 18, Rimes also went after Nashville’s Curb Records, the label that had sold 20 million of her albums. She claimed that the contract she and her parents signed with Curb when she was 12 was unfair, requiring her to complete up to 28 albums, including options for up to seven gospel CDs — about four times as many records as a typical contract mandates. Rimes contended that she had unwittingly ended up with a deal that would tie her up for at least another 10 years.

Mike Curb, the CEO and founder of Curb, remained unbowed. In 2001, without her cooperation, he released a new Rimes CD, *I Need You*, on the Curb imprint. The former child star was furious. She was already immersing herself in a new CD, one that would show people what she could *really* do unencumbered by her father’s hokey Nashville production. She had even cowritten a song for the first time. It was called, tellingly, “No Way Out.”

“I try to run but I keep on falling/Every time I turn around/I hear your voice and it

keeps on calling/I’m bound/There’s no way out. . . .”

Livid, Rimes made an appearance on *The Tonight Show With Jay Leno* in February 2001 and told her fans not to buy *I Need You*. On her Web site, rimestimes.com, she wrote, “This album was made without my creative input. I have not heard the album, so I cannot tell you my opinion on it. But what I want to make abundantly clear to you is that this album is not a reflection of myself as an artist but is solely the conception of Curb Records, and for that I am truly and deeply sorry.”

Events came to a boil in March 2001 when Rimes appeared in a Nashville courtroom to hear the decision on her suit against Curb. Wilbur was there, sitting with her adversaries. Rimes was shocked; she didn’t know he was going to attend. The court found in Curb’s favor. Her contract, however onerous, was watertight. Rimes began to cry. She turned to her father. If she was looking for comfort, she didn’t get it. His face seemed to say, “What did you expect?”



★ “I really felt like I was going insane.”

Within earshot of everyone in the courtroom, the young woman who once dedicated an album to Wilbur with the words “Thank you for working so hard and dedicating so much of your life to further my career” looked at him and spat: “I hate you.”

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

LEANN RIMES HAS lived in Los Angeles for almost four years, but if anything demonstrates how the clean-cut Nashville star hasn’t quite become acclimated to Hollywood’s louché ways, it’s that she arrives to an interview 10 minutes early. Even in her post-teenage rebellion, even with a strident new pop album

provocatively titled *Twisted Angel*, Rimes, now 20, is still a nice country girl at heart: She was born in Mississippi and raised, from age 6, in the small town of Garland, Texas.

The first thing you notice is that without the makeup and the big Nashville hairdo, she looks more like a teen now than in the photos that adorned her CD sleeves in adolescence.

She grimaces. “I look younger now than I did when I was 13,” she says wryly.

Being a teen star is difficult under any circumstances. Rimes believes, with some justification, that her experience was made much worse by booking agents and by Curb executives, who worked her too hard. A special area in hell, though, is reserved for Wilbur. While masterminding Rimes’s brutal schedule, he was also, according to her lawsuit, “triple-dipping” into her income by charging her an unprecedented combination of producer, management and guardianship fees. His take? Approximately 70 percent of her earnings.

It wouldn’t be fair to Wilbur to say he

was just one of those parents who pushed his daughter into the limelight for financial gain. Almost from infancy, Rimes had her eyes set on stardom — and not just ordinary stardom.

“That’s the first thing that struck me about her,” says Rod Essig, who became her agent. “She was extraordinarily focused. Beyond her years.”

Rimes wanted to be Barbra Streisand and Judy Garland rolled into one. “Yeah, that’s what I wanted

to be,” she says, grinning. “That’s what I wanted from 5 years old.”

That was the age precocious little LeAnn won her first talent competition. With her skills came money. By age 7 she was taking home \$80 every Saturday night for her performances on *Johnnie High’s Country Music Review*.

The huge success she rapidly enjoyed after signing with Curb made her worth millions. LeAnn is Wilbur and Belinda Rimes’s only child, and naturally a father would want to protect his daughter from the depredations of the music industry. But Wilbur’s degree of control over her career raised eyebrows, as the exorbitant fees cited in her lawsuit showed. →

"My god, I've gone
blind in my left ... oh,
wait — it's OK!"

TURQUOISE BEAD
BAND TOP FRONT
M. LORENZO L.A.
SKIRT BY MINKVOX

Looking back, Rimes seems more upset at losing her childhood than her millions. "I was a kid in the business making money," she says without rancor. "Everybody treated me like an adult."

While other teenage girls were going through the customary rites of sexual and emotional self-discovery, LeAnn Rimes was on the road, closely watched by her zealous father.

"I was protected so much," she says, sipping an iced tea in the California sun. Seated at the outdoor cafe of the chichi Fred Segal clothing store in West Hollywood, she's wearing lilac Manolo Blahnik flip-flops and a striped strapless top. Every few minutes, her right hand darts over and tugs the top up above her breast — a coy mannerism that reminds you that this self-possessed woman, who has appeared on the *Billboard* charts for eight years, is still not old enough to drink.

"I did close to 500 shows in three and a half years. I was in a fishbowl. I couldn't go anywhere or do anything."

Did you ever want to sneak off and lose your virginity?

"Never had time," she answers quickly. "I was stuck on the road until I was 17, and then I moved here to L.A. with my mom — so then I was in the house with my mom."

Ever try drugs?

"No, believe it or not. I remember being offered coke in a bathroom. I looked at it thinking, 'I would so much like to know what that's like, but I'm not going to.' I called my mom: 'Guess what? I didn't do it.'"

Traveling hundreds of miles each day on tours organized by her father, she had nothing to do but stare out the bus

Our antiperspirant keeps us dry. LeAnn's? Makes her glow!



★ "I've lost my baby fat and grown into a woman."

window or repeat platitudes to journalists in interviews he had arranged. "I really felt like I was going insane," she recalls. "I was in a whirlwind and I couldn't make it stop, no matter what I did."

A writer who toured with her back then mentioned how stressed-out she looked — and remembered her bursting into tears. Reminded of that, Rimes frowns. "That was just something I was used to."

Every night her set list was the same, climaxing with her signature song, "Blue," a tune given to her by veteran songwriter Bill Mack. He had written it for Patsy Cline, but she had died before she could record it.

At a concert one night in 1998, standing onstage in Grand Junction, Colorado,

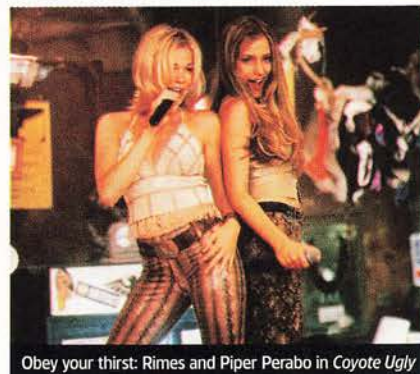
Rimes realized that she was too exhausted to sing it.

"I'm sorry," she told the crowd, "but I can't finish the show." She slipped off her stool and tried to make it offstage. Rod Essig remembers her passing out, collapsing unconscious in his arms. "She was sick," he says. "She shouldn't have been performing."

She woke up later, terrified, with an oxygen mask over her face. Only 15 years old, LeAnn Rimes was convinced that she was dying.

★★★★★

RIMES'S FIRST ATTEMPT to get out from under her father's influence was messy at best. Despite Wilbur's attempts to keep her away from boys, she fell for



Obey your thirst: Rimes and Piper Perabo in *Coyote Ugly*

Party of Five actor Andrew Keegan while in L.A. for a photo shoot when she was 15. He was four years her senior. The next year, she was halfway done building a house for herself in Nashville when she decided she could no longer bear living in a city where she felt like she was on permanent display. She abruptly

moved west. "In L.A.," Essig says, "she felt she could hide."

"Of course my father thought this was sin city," she laughs. "But I was moving here, and that was final."

The angelic country star, raised in a Southern Baptist household, was busy reinventing herself. She began the task with a hardheadedness that had little to do with her apple-pie public image. After moving to L.A., she pleaded with director Jerry Bruckheimer for a slot on the soundtrack to his babesploitation movie *Coyote Ugly*. The urban-cowgirl imagery was perfect for her. She threw herself so enthusiastically into the project that she ended up with a cameo in the film and four songs on the soundtrack, including the single "Can't Fight the Moonlight," which sold 3 million copies.

At home, Rimes's relationship with her father was souring. Wilbur never liked Keegan, who was the first to question where Rimes's money was going. Incensed, Wilbur claimed in his counter-suit that it was Keegan who was fleecing Rimes. He said Keegan was driving Rimes's \$150,000 Ferrari and that Keegan's mother (who had use of another of her cars, a BMW) was on the payroll as the singer's hairdresser, charging \$10,000 a session.

If being managed by your father is a classic show-business mistake, having a bodyguard who is your "pal" is another. Robert Lavetta, 44, was Keegan's personal trainer. He became Rimes's, too.

The three were inseparable. It looked as if Rimes had found the antidote to both Nashville and her father. In letters to his daughter, Wilbur complained bitterly that she was hanging around with "a kid who doesn't know his butt from a hole in the ground, and a 50-year-old wannabe." In his affidavit, he claimed Rimes was paying Lavetta, also her bodyguard, \$1,000 a day. As a trainer Lavetta was fine; Rimes took six inches off her waist. But she lost more than just baby fat.

One day she noticed that an assortment of her personal effects — some photographs and videotapes — were missing. She accused Lavetta of taking them, and fired him. He agreed to return the items — but only if Rimes paid him \$2 million. Indicted in September 2001, he was ordered into a diversion program three months later.

Trying to find her footing away from her father, Rimes had desperately looked for someone to trust. "Absolutely," she says. "You put your trust in people, and you learn. I learned."

It probably didn't help too much that one of the people →

Divas and Their Dancers: A Love Story

LeAnn and Dean Sheremet, J.Lo and Cris Judd: Why do so many female singers hook up with their lithe, deferential, hoofin' employees?

COUPLE #1 CHRISTINA AGUILERA AND JORGE SANTOS

THE ROMANCE The 26-year-old Latin lover from Brooklyn was hired to bump and grind against the genie in the bottle during her summer 2000 tour.

In Europe, "things just kind of erupted," Aguilera, 21, said, describing Santos as her "first love." "It was scary," she added, "because we come from two different places — he's a dancer and I'm a star, as bluntly as I can put it. It can be hard for a guy's ego."

Tabloids soon reported Santos's exploits at Manhattan gay clubs and painted the dancer as a bit "light in the slippers."

STATUS After almost two years with Santos, Aguilera cited "schedule conflicts" and moved on to Enrique Iglesias, Dave Grohl and Tobey Maguire, but not before penning "Infatuation," a song about Santos.

COUPLE #2 JENNIFER LOPEZ AND CRIS JUDD

THE ROMANCE Judd, 32, a onetime dancer at Disneyworld's premier nightclub, Pleasure Island, performed in the chorus for J.Lo's "Love Don't Cost a Thing" video in November 2000. Lopez soon promoted him to be her choreographer and music-video director.

In March 2001, just a month after breaking up with P. Diddy (then Puff Daddy), Lopez, 32, invited Judd to escort her to the Oscars. In September, the couple married. "I love my husband very much," Lopez beamed. "Cris has had a calming effect on me, and I need that."

STATUS Eight months after they sacrificed 10,000 rosebuds for their wedding ceremony,

Lopez and Judd's marriage was in trouble. Lopez's love scenes with Ben Affleck for an upcoming movie supposedly made Judd insane with jealousy. In September, Lopez filed for divorce. Her love just may, in fact, cost a thing: Publishers have offered Judd million-dollar tell-all book deals.

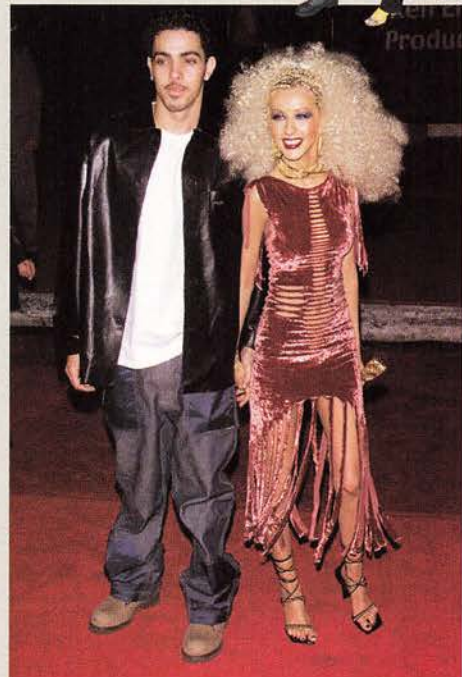


The Judds
(no relation)

COUPLE #3 MELANIE BROWN (A.K.A. MEL B, SCARY SPICE)

AND JIMMY GULZAR

THE ROMANCE The 34-year-old Dutch dancer did his soft-shoe at a gay club in the Netherlands before the Spice Girls hired him for their *Spice*



Jorge Santos and the always-understated Christina Aguilera

World tour in the summer of 1998.

After a seven-week romance, "Jimmy Goldcard" (so nicknamed by Mel's inner circle because he loved to spend her money) proposed to Brown, 27. She was three months pregnant with daughter Phoenix Chi when she zigzagged down the aisle in September 1998.

STATUS After 16 months of marriage, Gulzar accused Brown of sneaking off to America for a boob job instead of breast-feeding their infant. He said she left empty condom wrappers near their bed. Their breakup ended with Brown paying a total of £700,000 (\$1.1 million) to Gulzar.

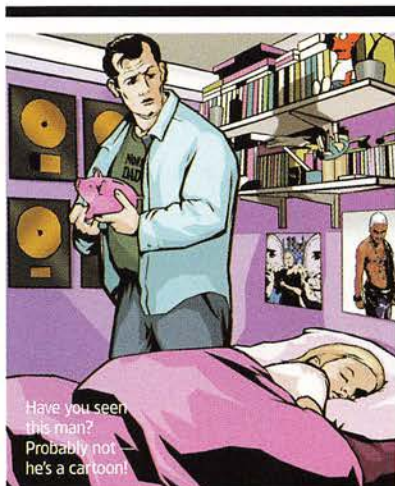
COUPLE #4 BRITNEY SPEARS AND BRIAN FRIEDMAN

THE ROMANCE Friedman, 24, met Spears, 20, when he performed with the self-proclaimed virgin at the Grammy Awards in February 2000.

He and Spears didn't start slow-dancing until April, when the former love of her life, 'N Sync's Justin Timberlake, chose his backup dancer Jenna Dewan as his main club-hopping make-out friend. Before long, Friedman was promoted to boyfriend and choreographer.

STATUS Strictly rebound action. After Timberlake delivered his breakup news to "Pinky" (his pet name for Spears) over the phone, Friedman was there to pick up the crumbs. Friedman's fancy footwork, however, could not make Spears forget Timberlake. Instead, she wrote lots of sad ballads for her next record. VICTORIA DESILVERIO





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- 1 When a record company offers you a contract, your father . . .
 - (a) Asks you to consider whether a career in music is something you really want to pursue.
 - (b) Offers to be your manager, producer and guardian, all for a standard 25 percent fee.
 - (c) Starts lighting his cigars with \$100 bills.
- 2 What is your father's pet name for you?
 - (a) "Champ"
 - (b) "The Talent"
 - (c) "Meal Ticket"
- 3 When you ask your father whether he's seen your missing piggy bank, he replies . . .
 - (a) "I'm exchanging it for a larger one, because I've decided to increase your allowance."
 - (b) "I'm exchanging it for a smaller one, because I've decided to teach you about responsibility."
 - (c) "Piggy what?"
- 4 Each morning, your father greets you . . .
 - (a) With a hug and a kiss.
 - (b) With a reminder about your singing lesson.
 - (c) With an invoice for services rendered.
- 5 In response to the accusation that he's ripping you off, your father says . . .
 - (a) "I would never do anything to hurt you."
 - (b) "Well, blossom, if that's the way you feel, maybe we should hire somebody else to look after your career."
 - (c) "On the advice of my attorneys, I decline to answer on the grounds that anything I say may incriminate me."

Mostly (c): Call a lawyer. (Not your father's. . .)
 Mostly (b): Be careful — your dad might be skimming some cream off the top.
 Mostly (a): Relax, your dad isn't ripping you off.
 Is your father ripping you off? If you answered . . .

telling you not to trust Lavetta was your father, in whom you had no faith.

"Exactly. I surrounded myself with people like Robert and my ex-boyfriend [Keegan] — people I thought I could trust — and ended up in another sticky situation. A lot of *Twisted Angel* is based on that. People think it's just about my dad. It's really not, honestly. It's about a lot of relationships."

Also that May, while she was still dating Keegan, Rimes was a presenter for the Country Music Awards. One of her dancers, 20-year-old Dean Sheremet, noticed how nervous she was. "This is your night," he reassured her. "Don't let anyone take it away from you."

Rimes was touched. She arranged to meet Sheremet for lunch at a friend's house in L.A. — "because I couldn't go out with him in public," she says. "It would be, like, this huge thing." Immediately after lunch, she asked him out to dinner.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

IN THE YEAR AND A HALF since, Sheremet and Rimes have spent only three days apart. They married this February in a modest family ceremony in Dallas. They wrote their own vows; the one Rimes liked the most, she says, was the one in which Sheremet pledged that she would always be able to trust him. "Because," she explains, "that's something that's always been missing in my life."

Wilbur attended the wedding. In the days before the ceremony, Rimes decided she wanted him there. That meant calling off the legal dogs, and Rimes dropped her lawsuit.

It would have been tricky having your father at the wedding when you were suing him.

"It was tricky enough ending it a week before the wedding. It was the most stressful time I've ever had in my life."

Was there something you needed to hear from him before you decided to call off the suit?



"The only person I don't want to thank is my hair-dresser": Rimes at the 1998 Billboard Music Awards

"I think 'I'm sorry' had to come from both of us at some point. And it has, enough so I can pick up a phone and say hello and have a normal conversation with him for the first time in a long time. Even though we'd battled it out about money, it wasn't all about that. I wanted to hear 'I love you' again." She shrugs. "You finally realize it's just money — and that's hard to say when it's millions and millions of dollars. I have to forgive, because I'm going to be a bitter bitch if I don't."

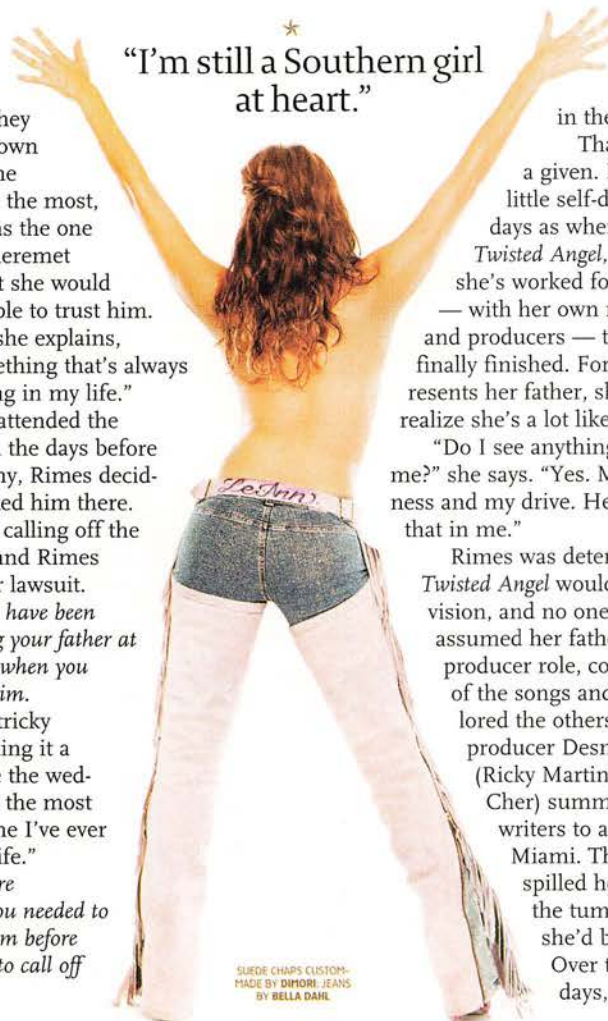
Is there still bitterness?

"There is," she says, "but not as much. I'll get over it. I'll make more money in the future."

That seems to be a given. Rimes has as little self-doubt these days as when she was 11. *Twisted Angel*, the record she's worked for three years — with her own manager and producers — to complete, is finally finished. For all that she resents her father, she has come to realize she's a lot like him.

"Do I see anything of him in me?" she says. "Yes. My stubbornness and my drive. He's instilled that in me."

Rimes was determined that *Twisted Angel* would be her vision, and no one else's. She assumed her father's executive producer role, cowrote four of the songs and carefully tailored the others to fit. Noted producer Desmond Child (Ricky Martin, Aerosmith, Cher) summoned songwriters to a workshop in Miami. There, Rimes spilled her guts about the tumultuous things she'd been through. Over the next few days, she walked →



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from room to room, listening to half-written songs and advising the writers. "That's something I would sing," she'd say, or "I wouldn't sing that."

When the record was almost done, she made the costly decision to junk Child's original tracks and rework them, mostly with two unknown producers, Peter Amato and Greg Pagani. "We'd already spent a ton of money on this record, and we had to scrap everything," she says. "It wasn't the right direction, and I knew I needed to get in there and let my ideas be heard."

The result isn't the most leftfield album, but its finely crafted diva-pop represents the fruits of Rimes's stubbornness. She has completed the transformation she first envisioned at 16. *Twisted Angel* isn't a country record at all. It's a total reinvention; it represents Rimes's personal Year Zero. It sounds like it was made by someone who has never spent a single day in Garland, Texas.

"It's three years of my life on this album, of fighting for what I want," she says with conviction.

The title is significant: "The angel is obviously the girl everyone's grown up listening to, this little girl with the big voice," she explains. "The twisted part is the strong girl I've grown into."

What do you see when you look at your old CDs?

"I try not to look. I see this little girl who was thrown into things. I see the big hair. I see Texas. I see the South. I see someone who didn't know what she was getting into."

What do you see when you look in the mirror these days?

"I like me. I'm really happy with what I turned out to be. I've lost my baby fat and grown into a woman. I still feel I'm wise beyond my years, but at least now I fit in my body."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

RIMES AND SHEREMET lead a quiet life with their six dogs. These days, she's busy catching up on all the things normal teenagers do: hanging out with friends, listening to Sheremet's techno CDs and talking until the sun comes up. They play Trivial Pursuit and Cranium. She doesn't like to drink, and never touches drugs.

What's the worst crime you've ever committed?

"That's a bad question to ask me, 'cause I haven't done anything. When I was little I stole a piece of bubble gum from a store. My mom saw me and made me spit it out. That's the only thing I've



LeAnn regrets demanding a "lace" shirt.



"Say 'Grammy!'": LeAnn Rimes, middle-school graduation photo, age 11

ever done. I've never stolen anything!"

Interestingly, "LeAnn Rimes" is an anagram for "lame sinner."

"That's what I am. Exactly. A lame sinner. I have a guilty conscience, so I could never do anything bad."

You've lived in Los Angeles for four years, and yet you don't have a single tattoo or piercing.

"I'm still a Southern girl at heart."

Pause. "And my mom would kill me."

She and Sheremet rarely venture out of their home. The last party she went to was her friend Elton John's Grammy soiree in February. She and John talked for an hour about her problems, and how

she had worked through them. John, she says, sympathized.

It's a measure of her reputation in the business that she attracts rock-legend fairy godfathers. Aerosmith's Steven Tyler, for example, is a close friend. He came to one of her shows in Boston when she was 15. She was midway through her a cappella rendition of "Amazing Grace" when Tyler screamed, piercing the silence: "She's so fuckin' amazing!" They've been friends ever since.

Rimes, finally, is no longer a teenager. "I'm ready for that to go away," she says with a smile.

On her wrist she wears a leather band that spells out her husband's name. For a pop star, she looks deliriously happy. The album's first single, "Life Goes On," has just become the song with the most radio airplay "adds." It's going to be a hit. For all its glossy production, it's as

★ "I don't have a safety net anymore."



Dean Sheremet introduces the world to his wife's "new direction."

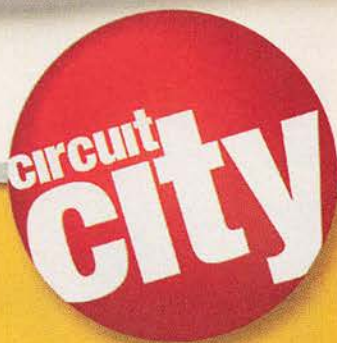
autobiographical as any scratchily performed emo track: "You sucked me in/And played my mind/Just like a toy/You would crank and wind/Baby I would give 'til you wore it out/Left me lyin' in a pool of doubt/And you're still thinking you're the Daddy Mac. . . ."

She doesn't know if her father has heard it. She hasn't played it for him, but he manages some acts that are signed to Curb, so he may have listened to it.

"I don't know how he's going to respond to it," she says. "But I think that he'll be proud of me. I really do. It's something that I really want — his approval. All the time."

For the first time, a new LeAnn Rimes record comes without the credit "produced by Wilbur C. Rimes."

"I don't have a safety net anymore," she says, grinning. "It's all on my shoulders." [BLENDER]



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The Seattle five-piece turns its back on grunge



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Every original album reviewed and rated!

U2

Crashing through the 1990s with Bono and pals, p152

A Cut Above

Eddie Vedder leads Pearl Jam away from the neogrunge they inspired

ROCKERS DON'T get any more serious than Eddie Vedder. Compared to Pearl Jam's singer, Bruce Springsteen is a drunken sailor and Bono is a leprechaun.

It's easy to imagine Vedder's direct musical spawn, Scott Stapp of Creed and Chad Kroeger of Nickelback, chilling out with a beer when they're not wailing about higher purpose or crushed dreams. But Vedder always seems glued to a political or moral soapbox. "We're perceived as humorless pricks," he said two years ago — and it's true, humor isn't his gift: In a new song called "Bushleaguer," he grumbles about the ruling class and President Bush. But even with such an easy target, he can't come up with a joke snappier than "Born on third; thinks he got a triple."

For those keeping count, *Riot Act* is Pearl Jam's eightieth album: seven studio records plus *Live on Two Legs* (1998) and 72 bootleg-style double CDs from a 2000–01 world tour. That's a big claim on attention for a band that always proclaims its humble place in the cosmic scheme.

Whether because of his "humility" or his sanctimony, lots of people find Vedder insufferable: In a 1993

PEARL JAM RIOT ACT

★★★★

EPIC

Saturday Night Live skit, Adam Sandler mocked the singer's choked, wild-eyed style. Of course, irritation can be a promising sign in rock; it means the songs are getting under people's skin, challenging their assumptions. And Pearl Jam's sense of principle can make ordinary sinners uncomfortable.

But it's also true that Pearl Jam grow more self-absorbed with each album. The band that started out sympathizing with a tormented student ("Jeremy") and a woman who fearfully settles for an unworthy mate ("Better Man") is now instead committed to mirror gazing. The album's first single, "I Am Mine," is a rock chantey about self-reliance that verges on self-parody: "I know I was born and I know that I'll die/The in-between is mine."

Vedder's good intentions are palpable on *Riot Act*, an album about love and death with a side of politics. "Please help me to help you help yourself," he howls in "Save You"; in "Love Boat Captain," this Beatles disciple actually declares "All you need is love." Along the

way, Vedder criticizes the greedy and ponders mortality, imagining himself as a memory-haunted ghost or imagining one final act of recycling: "Swallowin' seeds on the deathbed/Dig a hole in the garden."

Lately, modern rock is full of self-important men announcing their injuries while the power chords peal. Pearl Jam have to take some of the blame: With sales of 11 million, *Ten*, their debut, taught

thousands of suburban baritones that their un-nurturing parents and thoughtless girlfriends were the stuff of pained anthems, and

grunge took over alternative rock.

Musically, Pearl Jam have repented by withdrawing from the mainstream: Since 1994's *Vitalogy*, none of their records has sold more than a million copies. Pearl Jam have disowned their neogrunge stepchildren, departing '90s Seattle for '60s San Francisco. The songs on *Riot Act* are laced together with the tangled guitar lines of Stone Gossard and Mike McCready, who look back to folk-rock and psychedelia; the hefty wheeze of a Hammond organ often cements the connection to the '60s. The production seems to capture a band that's playing live, with the guitarists constantly pushing each other and tunes evolving on the spot.

As long as the songs are up-tempo, Vedder's troubled reflections sound trenchant. "Save You," "Cropduster," "Get Right," even the self-righteous "Green Disease" all hurtle along, skipping beats in their eagerness to get to the next riff. But the moment the band eases back and there's a chance to consider what Vedder is groaning about, the impatience returns. "I'm starting to believe that this hopeless situation is what I'm trying to achieve," he sings in the album's convoluted last song, "All or None." Vedder doesn't need to get happy — just to look beyond the mirror. *JON PARELES*

Pearl Jam have repented for grunge by withdrawing from the mainstream.

Pearl Jam Their Life in CDs →

TEN

EPIC, 1991

★★★★

A grunge cornerstone: two parts Zeppelin, one part compassion. The band flexes power-chord brawn as Vedder yowls sympathy for psychos, illegitimate children and outcasts.

VS.

EPIC, 1993

★★★★★

Vedder makes himself the voice of the abused — furious, vengeful, pensive — as the band adds folk-rock, punk and even funk to the metal. *VS.* stretches the music in all the right ways.

VITALOGY

EPIC, 1994

★★

The burdens of fame lead to anthems

of existential crisis and a scattered album, with a handful of keepers in the mix — "Corduroy," "Better Man," "Not for You" — amid a few too many misfires and throwaways.

NO CODE

EPIC, 1996

★

Maybe *No Code* signals exhaustion; maybe it's a loyalty test for Pearl Jam fans, many of whom promptly looked elsewhere. The band flails and rambles and gripes, rarely finding a tune.

YIELD

EPIC, 1998

★★★★

Focusing their songwriting again and looking back to *VS.*, Pearl Jam reconfigure themselves as a post-grunge, post-megastar band, drawing more than ever on '60s rock and

calmly examining past follies and diminished expectations.

LIVE ON TWO LEGS

EPIC, 1998

★★★★

Forget the filler: Pearl Jam cull the latter-day songs that can stand beside "Even Flow" and "Daughter." Vedder proves that even when his voice is blasted, he leads a band that brings grace and muscle to arena rock.

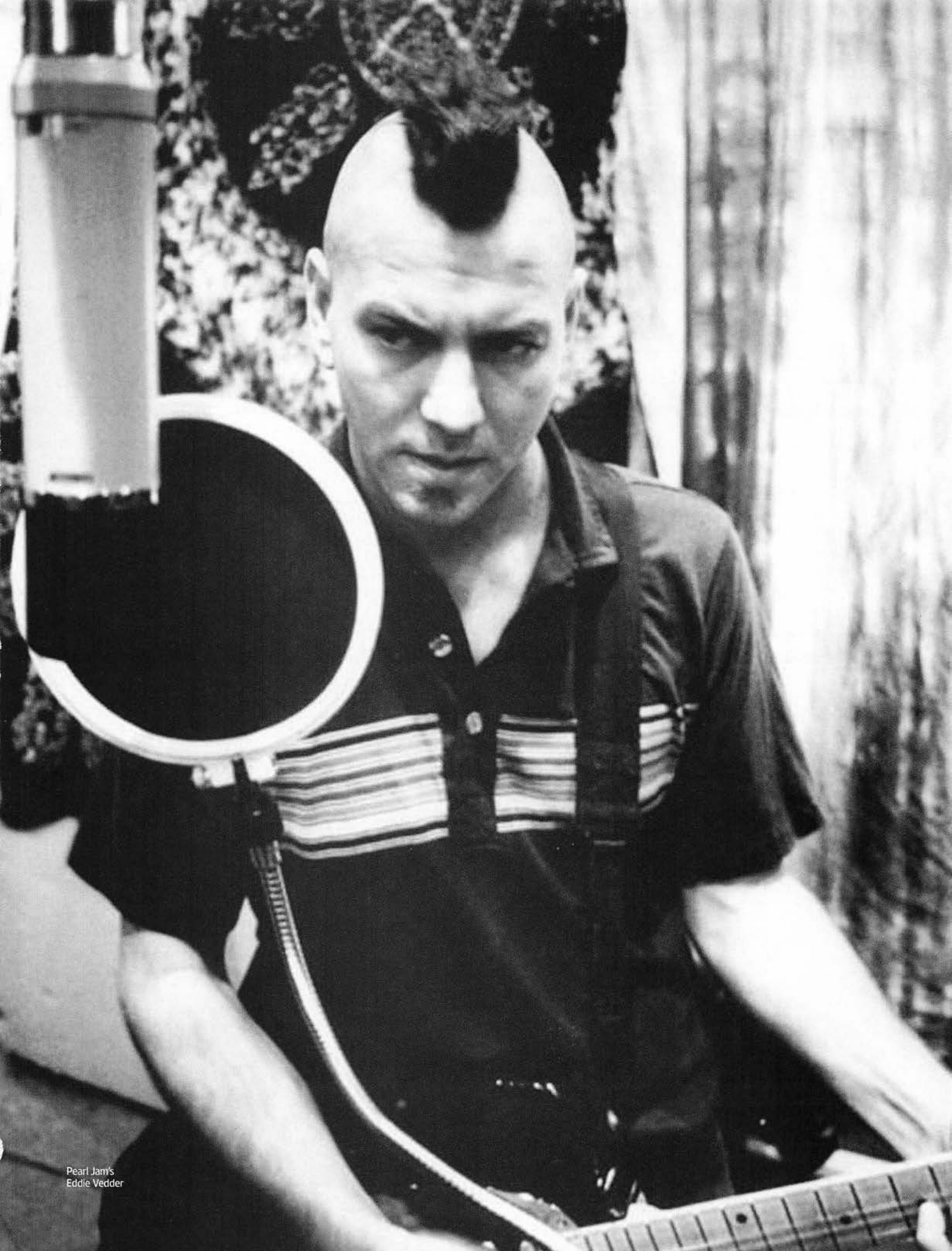
BINAURAL

EPIC, 2000

★★

The riffs and melodies are there, and so is the standard cast of lovers, depressives and semicoherent philosophers. What's missing in this batch of journeyman songs, though, is an element of surprise — unless hearing Vedder play the ukulele qualifies. *JON PARELES*





Pearl Jam's
Eddie Vedder

RYAN ADAMS

DEMOLITION ★★

LOST HIGHWAY

Elton John's favorite singer-songwriter continues a prolific streak by releasing rangy demos

As the rambunctious leader of Whiskeytown, Ryan Adams sometimes seemed to be channeling alt-country's Holy Spirit, Gram Parsons, but on last year's solo breakthrough, *Gold*, he steered toward the Stones-y *Exile on Main Street* side of the country-rock boulevard. On this collection of demos,

recorded before, during and after *Gold*, the singer-songwriter tries on a closet's worth of assorted guises, from tortured artist with acoustic guitar ("Cry on Demand," "She Wants to Play Hearts") and nonchalant, twang-filled troubadour ("Hallelujah," "Chin Up, Cheer Up") to skittish garage-rocking misfit ("Nuclear," "Starting to Hurt"). The result, unfortunately, honors shifts in style over substance, and doesn't answer a lingering question: whether Adams's clearly restless muse has any defining center.

BILLY ALTMAN

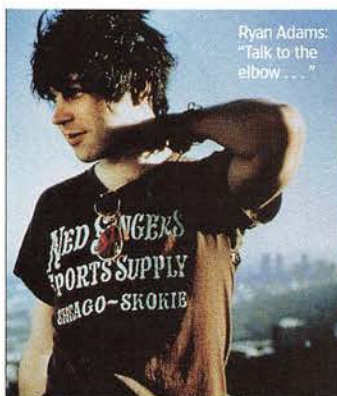
ADD N TO (X)

LOUD LIKE NATURE ★★

MUTE

Three Brits love old-school European electro-punk and are too cool to write proper "songs"

Sometimes sounding great isn't quite enough. Add N to (X) have a signature tone down, for sure — one part gurgling robotic whir, one part analog synth excavation, one part post-punk porno soundtrack, one part Chemical Brothers-style big beat. There are cool details all over their fourth album, such as the synthesized grunts and tweedy guitar that emerge from the mix near the end of "Sheez Mine," or the way a chokingly thick bass-synthesizer buzz



Ryan Adams: "Talk to the elbow..."

underscores the fist-in-the-air punk yelps of "Large Number." But there's something forgettable and half-finished about a lot of it: The fancy production never crystallizes into fully realized songs, and the effect is like holographic wrapping paper on an empty box.

DOUGLAS WOLK

DOT ALLISON

WE ARE SCIENCE ★★

MANTRA/BEGGARS GROUP

Dreamy Scottish singer cannonballs into the electro pool

Like Beth Orton or Lamb's Louise Rhodes, Dot Allison is a diva-of-distress

with a high sonic pedigree, aching away under a warm shower of electronic music. Like those singers, Allison is also an agile trend-spotter: As part of early-'90s trio One Dove, she made dreamy pop, and on her second solo album, she hooks up with Keith Tenniswood of the au courant electro act Two Lone Swordsman. It's highly clinical (Atari-like explosive bursts serve as percussion on one track), and Allison is as remote as ever: "Don't rescue me when I play with fire," she languidly sings on "Substance." On a remix, Felix da Housecat turns the song into pure gloss, one of the electro anthems of the year. Here, she's just a ghost in Tenniswood's machine.

ETHAN BROWN

THE ALUMINUM GROUP

HAPPYNESS ★★

WISHING TREE

Two Chicago brothers aim for Magnetic Fields but find a sitcom

The fifth album by Chicago's Aluminum Group finds the faithful pop craftsmen reveling in the easy-listening, keyboard-and-melody splendor characterized by Alan Parsons. (They named their most shining homage to Parsons "Pop.") With such DIY touches as drum machines and cheap synthesizers, *Happiness*

Well-Red

A road trip of the mind from the high priestess of dramatic pop

TORI AMOS

SCARLET'S WALK ★★★★★

EPIC

TORI AMOS'S mannered singing and unapologetically gorgeous songs have gone out of fashion since she burst onto the scene in 1992. Neither is her Women's Studies viewpoint as new as it was when her cover of Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit" revealed the song also to be an affecting ballad. To her credit, eccentricity, melodicism and feminism come as naturally to Amos as her green eyes, and her seventh full-length album is her most fully realized yet.

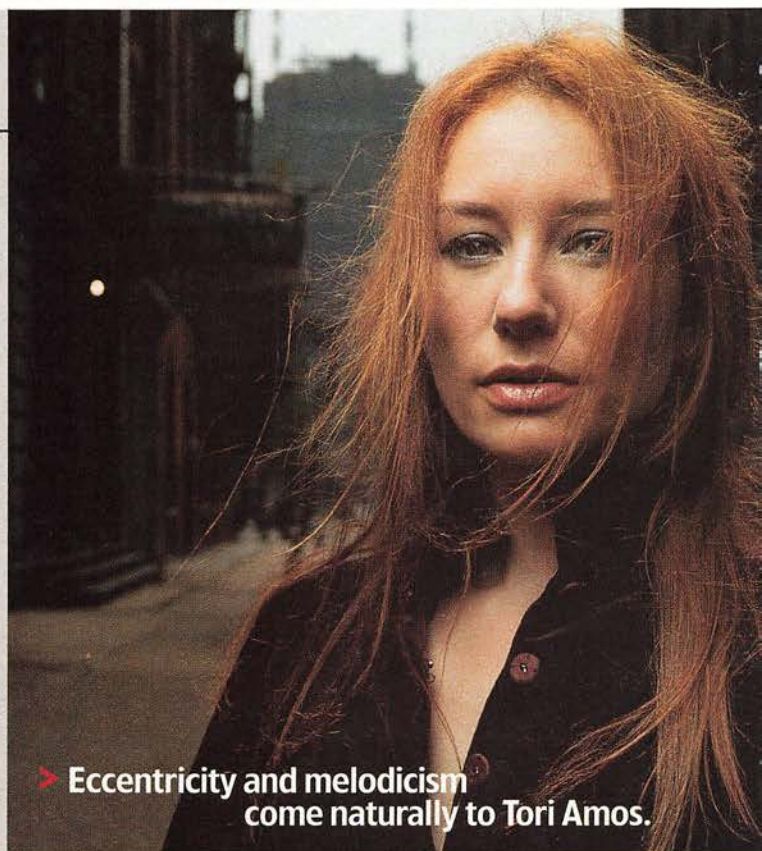
Against gleaming, meltingly smooth arrangements, she crafts iconic tales, vague but rich with resonance and imagery. She sketches her lyrics with brief, powerful strokes, evoking in a few words the fallen woman of "Amber Waves," who went "from ballet class to a lap dance," and the murder victim of "Carbon." She adopts the stance of a weary pal on "Don't Make Me Come to Vegas," about a friend who seems to be in a dangerous situation. Her elliptical

approach continues even on the poignant "I Can't See New York," whose narrator is stuck inside a doomed hijacked airplane.

The songs are one after another of Amos's patented ultra-emotive ballads, driven by portentous piano chords that swell and crash over lush orchestration. As it meanders through regional landscapes, conjured more through poetic implication than blunt description, *Scarlet's Walk* unites the darker threads of women's experiences with those of other outcasts: gay boys on "Taxi Ride," African-Americans on "Virginia" and Native Americans on the a capella "Wampus Prayer." Uncommonly rich and unfashionably gynocentric, *Scarlet's Walk* makes the personal universal, using the stories of women lost, left and unseen to chart a map of the American psyche. ARION BERGER

TORI AMOS'S CURRENT LISTENING

- ▶ NEIL YOUNG
HARVEST REPRISE
- ▶ ST. GERMAIN
BOULEVARD RECORDS



▶ Eccentricity and melodicism come naturally to Tori Amos.



follows in the at-home tradition of provocative British songwriter Momus and Stephin Merritt of New York's Magnetic Fields, both charming non-singers. But while the Aluminum Group's brothers, Frank and John Navin, have the chops to sing as well as they play and write, their sense of perfection is also their downfall. Rather than being soulful, "Kid" and "Tiny Decision" seem written for sitcoms, better suited to *Three's Company* than the local coffeehouse.

CHRISTOPHER O'CONNOR

THE APPLES IN STEREO

VELOCITY OF SOUND ★★★★★

SPINART

Lo-fi psychedelic legends stomp on fuzz pedals, amp up the pop factor

Apples in Stereo leader Robert Schneider made his reputation as a home-recording whiz with a psychedelic bent and a Beach Boys fixation, but live, the Colorado band has always leaned much more toward hard pop: fuzz galore, high speeds and hooks emerging from everywhere. *Velocity of Sound* documents that side of the Apples, and it's their tightest, bounciest album — a concise 11 songs in 29 minutes. Almost every one sounds like a rocked-up cover of some brilliant '60s garage single, but the sparkling, densely packed melodies are all the Apples' own. And drummer Hilarie Sidney has blossomed as a songwriter; her "Rainfall" and "I Want" are both impossibly catchy.

DOUGLAS WOLK

ARI-UP

PUNKY REGGAE QUEEN ★★★★★

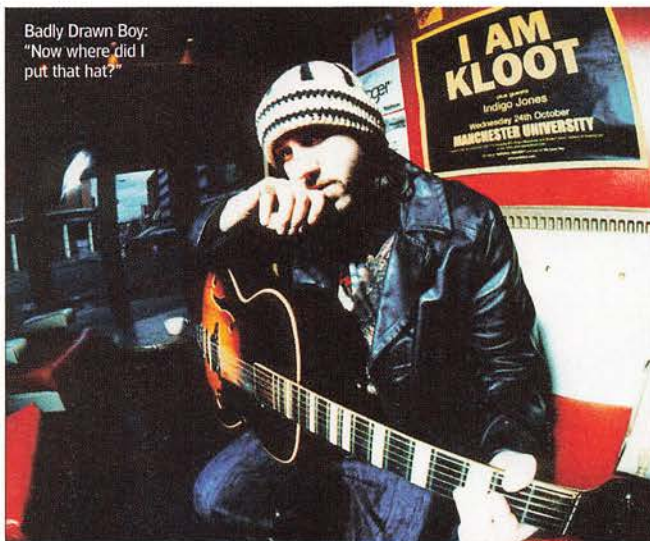
CONVERGE

Frontwoman for cult punk girl group the Slits gets deeper into dub

For all its grownup talk of babies (she has one) and dependable men (she's looking), Ari-Up's lightly tropical-flavored solo album retains the solid do-it-yourself values of her punk glory with all-girl '70s upsetters the Slits. Ari-Up — born in England as Ariane Foster, she moved to Jamaica post-Slits and recorded under the name Medusa, a tribute to her knee-length dreads — is not only steeped in the loping beats and quick-lipped delivery of reggae, dancehall and dub, but also in love with the optimism and inclusiveness of island pop. *Queen* is a genial mix of the simplicities of melodic pop and the complexities of drum & bass, put over with Ari-Up's trademark hiccuping, growling and wailing singing style, which has acquired a credible Jamaican accent.

ARION BERGER

Badly Drawn Boy:
"Now where did I
put that hat?"



JOSEPH ARTHUR

REDEMPTION'S SON ★★★★★

ENJOY/UNIVERSAL

Lots of deep thinkers think this moody Midwestern singer is a genius. And he agrees!

A lot of people think highly of Joseph Arthur — Peter Gabriel signed him, and the *New York Times* named his *Come to Where I'm From* one of the best albums of 2000. But no one admires Joseph Arthur as much as Joseph Arthur does. Even by the normally self-absorbed standards of confessional songwriting, *Redemption's Son* seems unusually interested in its creator's navel, from the dead-dad musings of the title tune to the introspective rapture of "I Would Rather Hide." Admittedly, the Ohio-born multi-instrumentalist is a compelling lyricist and gifted singer, and there are moments when this third album is blissfully gorgeous — just not enough of them to make his song of himself interesting to others.

J.D. CONSIDINE

BAD BRAINS

I & I SURVIVED ★★★★★

GROOVE ATTACK

Watered-down remixes of a seminal hardcore band

When the Clash were beefing up their punk attack by dabbling in reggae during the early '80s, Bad Brains went the opposite direction: The D.C. natives with Rastafari roots embraced noise and thrash and became a first-rate hardcore band. *I & I Survived*, which collects remixes of 12 '80s tracks, lacks the punch of the great Bad Brains albums, notably their self-titled debut and 1983's *Rock for Light*. With a few exceptions — the

metal guitar on the title track, the Middle Eastern grooves of "Gene Machine" — this is unremarkable dub music: low-key reggae beats, sporadic vocals, lots of keyboard and guitar noodling. Background music from an otherwise great band.

CHRISTIAN HOARD

BADLY DRAWN BOY

HAVE YOU FED THE FISH? ★★★★★

XL/ARTISTDIRECT

Odd British songsmith fantasizes about rejecting Madonna. Silly boy!

Badly Drawn Boy (Damon Gough) is not your average singer-songwriter. He rejects the vanity and self-obsession common to his trade (he rejects washing, too, judging by the state of his trademark woolly cap). Gough deals in the relentlessly upbeat, and his recent soundtrack for the Hugh Grant vehicle *About a Boy* was practically a collection of nursery rhymes. Oddly, his second proper album tempers the jollity with some beef, or at least a couple of traditional rock-guitar solos, and the result is



MC Paul Barman demonstrates "lamest gang sign ever."

an uncharacteristic stiffness. Gough is ill at ease rocking out ("Born Again"), and his usually sprightly writing seems nervous, stilted and reliant on elaborate brass and strings ("All Possibilities," "How?") for energy. Only the gleeful "You Were Right" — in which he dreams of being "married to the queen" and spurning Madonna's advances — captures the happy-go-lucky air that's his principal charm.

RYAN ELIOT

MC PAUL BARMAN

PAULLELUJAH ★★★★★

COUP D'ETAT

He's either the Ivy League Eminem or a bookish Vanilla Ice. Or both

MC Paul Barman is a geeky Brown University grad with no discernible flow, but on his first full-length, he's determined to prove he's no hip-hop novelty. *Paullelujah* showcases his intricate, encyclopedic and frequently hysterical wordplay, as he proudly profanes all that's sacred. He catalogs erotic acts he'd like to commit on women from Liz Hurley to Cynthia Ozick ("Cock Mobster"), muses provocatively on suburban racism ("Bleeding Brain Grow") and compares his work to a Homeric epic and a nine-hour Holocaust documentary in the same breath ("Excuse You"). The dabble-happy production doesn't really pop like *It's Very Stimulating*, Barman's Prince Paul-produced debut EP. But anyone who rhymes abortion-rights pioneer Margaret Sanger with *bloody coat hanger* is not only clever, but pretty brave too.

DAVID PEISNER

BBMAK

INTO YOUR HEAD ★★★★★

HOLLYWOOD

Yesterday's boy-band heroes visit Chess King, get soft-rock makeover

As their 2000 hit "Back Here" proved, BBMAK's doubly accessible mix of boy-band harmonies and grunge-free guitars is mighty twee, but not without songwriting smarts. The British trio's second album downplays teen-pop in favor of a louder adult sincerity that suggests the squeaky-clean din of classic REO Speedwagon, Journey and Boston without the annoying community-college opera squeal. The first single, "Out of My Heart," sets the new tone: goodbye faux-R&B beats, hello anguished '70s guitar solos. Swapping their bouncy bubblegum hybrid for predictable rock purity may get BBMAK past the boy-band backlash, but fans of bland can be fickle. Heavy on hooks, *Into Your Head* nevertheless lacks legs.

BARRY WALTERS →

THE BEES

SUNSHINE HIT ME ★★★

WALL OF SOUND/ASTRALWERKS

Wiggy debut from a British duo who should tour with the Hives

The Isle of Wight's sole claim to musical fame is its infamously bleak 1970 festival, which featured limp sets by soon-to-be-stiff rock gods Jimi Hendrix and Jim Morrison. Now the island has yielded the Bees, a duo who have used isolation to their advantage, turning to arcane corners of their record collections for inspiration. The kaleidoscopic results are summed up by "A Minha Menina," which sounds like a garage band attempting to play ragtime while singing in Spanish. Elsewhere, ramshackle falsetto funk rubs shoulders with glorious, freewheeling ska pastiches. *Sunshine Hit Me* recalls the Beta Band with the "wacky" knob mercifully turned down, and the wild musical eclecticism tempered by a endearing warmth and a wealth of gorgeous melodies.

ALEXIS PETRIDIS

TONY BENNETT AND K.D. LANG

A WONDERFUL WORLD ★★★★★

COLUMBIA

Two generations of big-voiced balladeers give CPR to old-age classics

Typically, using *easy listening* and *understated* to describe a record would lead to visions of Florida retirees in droopy cardigans. But Tony Bennett (the best lounge singer alive since Frank Sinatra's death) and shit-kicker-turned-cabaret act k.d. lang have minted a breezy album of duets that makes both terms seem like the rarest of virtues. In the past, Bennett and lang have sometimes lapsed into vocal histrionics, but not here. Throughout the disc's well-chosen classic pop songs, including "What a Wonderful World" and "Dream a Little Dream of Me," Bennett plays the craggy sage to lang's smooth operator. When matched with equally subtle strings and a focused, swinging combo, these songs, heard so often in nightclubs around the world, sound new.

K. LEANDER WILLIAMS

THE BLASTERS

TROUBLE BOUND ★★★★★

HIGHTONE

Reunited L.A. rockers, playing a dream set of classics in their hometown

Only a minute into *Trouble Bound's* first track, "Red Rose," the Blasters answer the question that hangs over any live reunion record: Yes, they can still kick up the roots-rock ruckus that made

Secretly, Buckethead preferred Popeye's.



them Americana greats in the early '80s. For the rest of this set, the Alvin brothers (Phil, vocals, and Dave, guitar and songwriting) and their nothing-fancy rhythm section play like they've just been beamed from Sun Studios in Memphis during the golden years, and are on a mission to obliterate every contrivance that has sullied rock since the 1960s. They nail the tricky ensemble hiccup of the title track and expand the boogie intensity of "Long White Cadillac" — and both Alvins turn in solos that show they're not coasting. Particularly mesmerizing is Phil's harmonica turn on "So Long Baby Good-bye," which interpolates blues basics "When the Saints Go Marching In" and "Lil' Liza Jane."

TOM MOON

BONE THUGS-N-HARMONY

THUG WORLD ORDER ★★★

RUTHLESS

Eazy-E's understudies mix pissed-off politics with tender soul

Like a Tom Clancy movie, *Thug World Order* opens with militaristic grandeur —



k.d. lang and Tony Bennett: "Hey, fella, when's the broad showing up?"

an urgent orchestral score hovers like the apocalypse as the four Cleveland MCs turn their characteristic mile-a-minute rhyming into a war chant. But Eazy-E's musical progeny prefer revolt to patriotism: "War against terrorism? Fuck that, what about the war against us?" they spit on "What About Us?," a diatribe against racism and injustice. Their anger climaxes on "Pump Pump" as gunshots and synth stabs accent tales of random blood-spilling, a high hat keeping time like a ticking bomb. They can't stay mad for long, though, ending with a series of wistful jams more soul-influenced than 1995's sentimental Grammy-winning hit "Tha Crossroads." Shooting polysyllabic rounds of light, singsong vocals, the Bones exit the battlefield they've conjured on a note of optimistic, if pained, introspection.

JONAH WEINER

CORY BRANAN

THE HELL YOU SAY ★★★

MADJACK

A smart singer-songwriter from Memphis who not long ago was screeching his demonic lungs out

A low-key singer who favors slow-strummed tunes that sneak up on you with the sly wallop of a fifth shot of Jack Daniel's, 25-year-old Cory Branan puts out intense, evocative sketches of longing and misery with a confidence that may come from his stint as a death-metal strutter. He even nervily offers a song here called "Jolene," which reimagines Dolly Parton's country classic from the perspective of a man bewitched by the minx Parton fretted would steal her man. Minimally backed and

armed with fierce lyrical gifts, Branan rejects Southern musical clichés, approaching his songs with humor, intuition and lowdown poeticism, whether he's yearning at the roller rink (in "Skateland South") or chasing down a "Troublesome Girl" in a ballad swaying with Spanish guitar.

ARION BERGER

JACKSON BROWNE

THE NAKED RIDE HOME ★★

ELEKTRA

Veteran singer-songwriter, star of the late '70s, honors Native Americans and recounts a blow job

The extreme relaxation that distinguishes Jackson Browne's singing doesn't hint at the careful professionalism of his literate Southern California soft rock. As on his previous 11 albums, Browne, 54, makes deft but dull observations on the dark heart of middle-aged love, starting with a thoughtful six-minute song about getting a blow job in a car. Sometimes pretension gets the best of him, as in "Sergio Leone," which turns the director into a character in one of his own films. Browne is full of conviction on one protest song, "Casino Nation," which is haunting, keen-eyed and sincerely felt, but he makes romantic jaundice feel polished and clean, like music for a roadhouse full of glum grad students.

ARION BERGER

BUCKETHEAD

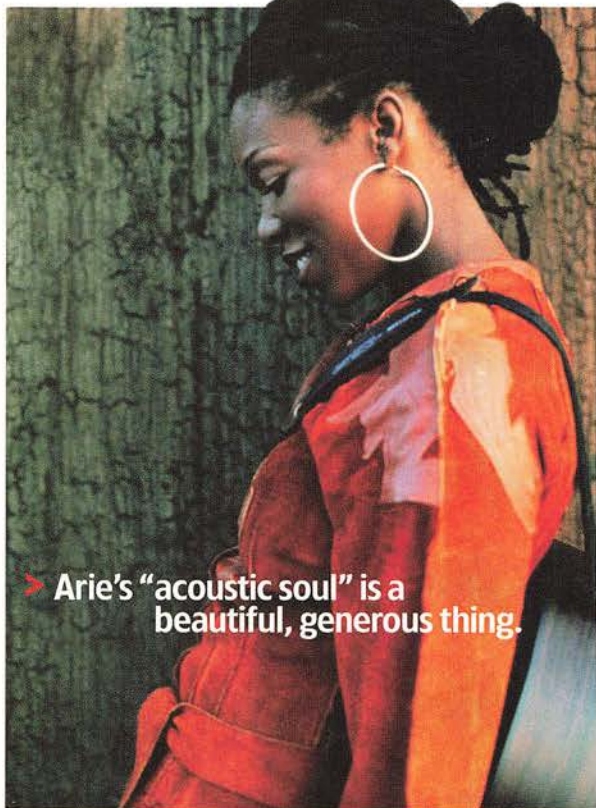
BERMUDA TRIANGLE ★★★★★

CITY HALL

Finger-lickin' good eleventh solo record from new Guns N' Roses guitarist who's fond of KFC hats

When you're a guitarist professionally known as Buckethead, you have to be willing to appear in public with a bucket on your head. That's exactly what the new Guns N' Roses axman did, playing furious shred guitar during the band's surprise slot at the MTV Video Music Awards in August. Once dismissed from an audition with the Red Hot Chili Peppers because he just couldn't ... stop ... soloing, this weirdo, never photographed without his disguise, has a style that sounds like a mosquito buzzing around your ear. Assisted by Extrakd, a Bay Area DJ, "Head spews thickets of guitar arpeggios — and, in "Sea of Expanding Shapes," the occasional placid jazz chord — in and around ping-ponging beats and soothing soundscapes. *Bermuda Triangle* is far more tuneful than Buckethead's avant-gooftball image would suggest, although it lacks the raunch to sate anyone waiting for GN'R's long-simmering *Chinese Democracy*.

ROB KEMP →



➤ Arie's "acoustic soul" is a beautiful, generous thing.

Folk Hero

More musical chicken soup for the soul

INDIA.ARIE

VOYAGE TO INDIA ★★

MOTOWN

HER DEBUT, *Acoustic Soul*, promised great things from India Arie. Swamped with Grammy nominations, it revealed a firm grounding in blues and Motown, and a modern sensibility that took the satin-sheet feel of quiet-storm soul to new realms of spirituality and emotion.

On her follow-up, Arie still evinces a fine vocal command of mellow R&B, and she writes about the man-woman dynamic with empathy, taste and self-respect. But in the year and a half since her debut, post-diva soul has become more sophisticated via Alicia Keys, Jill Scott and Norah Jones. Even with an electrified band, Arie's uninflected gentleness comes off as dull and undistinguished.

Much of *Voyage to India* is a soporific swath of happy-hour wallpaper, with a cocktail-lounge electric guitar going *blip-bloop* over deep, muffled drum beats and a light coating of strings. The music is pleasant enough,

smoothly assembled and projected with the cool confidence of a veteran band winding down after the crowd has gone home.

Her small variations in style raise the interest level — the mid-tempo "Can I Walk With You" sounds like an '80s R&B artist making a pop move, and the R&B tropicalism of "Headed in the Right Direction" allows Arie's vocals maximum sway.

Her folkie side is, as always, imaginative and moving. On the joyous love song "Complicated Melody," Arie plays a schoolgirl's word game ("If he were a car, he'd be deep, dark forest green... with room for all of humanity inside") to describe her man; "Gratitude" is as brief and heart-felt as a prayer. Arie's "acoustic soul" is a beautiful, generous thing, especially in contrast to the loungey slickness of the rest of the album. **ARION BERGER**

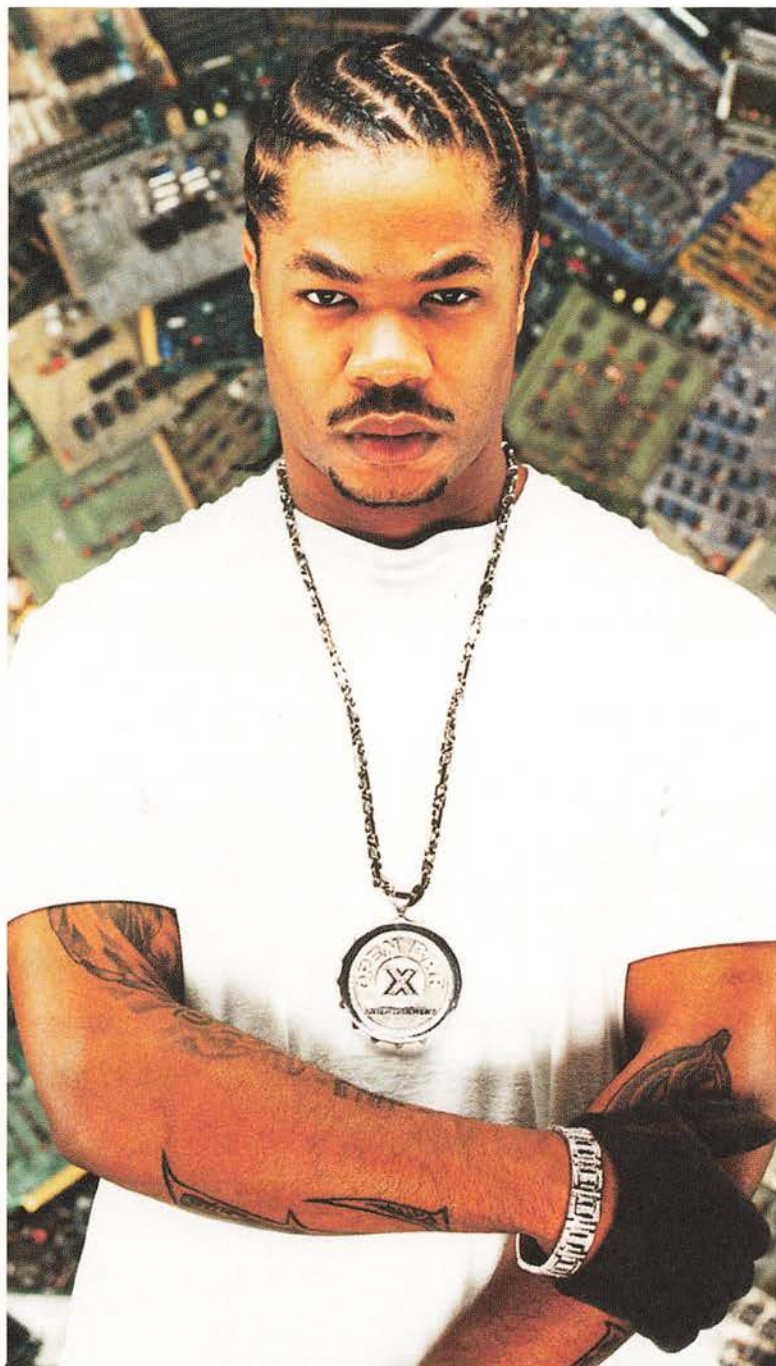
INDIA.ARIE'S CURRENT LISTENING

▶ K-OS

EXIT EP1 CANADA

▶ NORAH JONES

COME AWAY WITH ME BLUE NOTE



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AVAILABLE AT

TARGET

JEFF BUCKLEY/ GARY LUCAS

SONGS TO NO ONE 1991-1992
★★★

EVOLVER/KNITTING FACTORY

Eleven live tracks and demos — the late, sainted singer's first recordings

Any fan of Jimi Hendrix knows the Genius Syndrome: If an artist with a supernatural talent dies young, his friends, associates and record labels will soon release recordings of him singing in the shower. The 11-minute demo "Hymn L'Amour" — essentially, Jeff Buckley, who died five years ago at 30, sonorously scatting over a four-note riff played by Gary Lucas, master of tricky guitar ripples in Captain Beefheart's early-'80s band — suggests that *Songs to No One* is going to be a torturous case in point. Mercifully, it soon improves: Early tryouts of "Grace" and "Mojo Pin" (which appeared on 1994's *Grace*) offer a thrilling sense of Buckley finding his feet, and a frantic live piece, "Malign Fiesta (No Soul)," shines light on his rarely glimpsed punk side. Lucas says he has eight hours of material on hand, but unless he's held back other gems, the archive trawling should probably stop here.

JOHN HARRIS



TEMUERA MORRISON
Jango Fett



**VIKTER DUPLAIX
DJ KICKS**
IK7

"I've been filming a movie called *Blueberry* in Paris, so I'm getting into French house music, a bit of deep house."

LAST ALBUM YOU BOUGHT?

RICHARD BUCKNER

IMPASSE ★★★

OVERCOAT

Third indie release (fifth CD overall) from determined country crooner dropped from major label in 1998

Since parting company with MCA half a decade ago, Californian Richard Buckner has continued to plow the lonely furrow of the devoted, smoke-voiced alt-country artist. With *Impasse* — recorded mostly solo in the isolation of his home studio in Edmonton, Alberta — this involves stripped-down arrangements of songs colored with discreet percussion and junk-store keyboards. Throughout, Buckner's confessional, obliquely sensitive lyrics are laced with a

kind of jaded positivity, used to best effect when tussling with retirement in "Born Into Giving It Up Again," in which he announces, "Oh, I take it back tonight." Overall, *Impasse* offers no classic tunes to set it apart from the alt-country pack, but the dark pop of "Count Me In" and the gentle meanderings of "Loaded at the Wrong Door" come pretty close.

TOM DOYLE

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

ONCE MORE, WITH FEELING
★★★

MUTANT ENEMY/ROUNDER

Music from acclaimed *Buffy* episode gets the Broadway-musical treatment

This is a strange little artifact. *Buffy* creator Joss Whedon also writes faultless music, expertly depicting each character's personality and the relationships between them as songs carom from style to style: the sweet soft rock of witchy Tara's love song "Under Your Spell," mentor Giles's "Standing," vampire Spike's passionate rock-operatic showpiece "Rest in Peace" and a sleek, showy "What You Feel." The trouble is, the narrative of this key

episode is one segment of a wider arc whose particulars the songs take for granted, and the crucial turning points that are expressed here — Giles's departure, Willow's betrayal of Tara, Dawn's alienation — lose their poignancy when stripped of context. For *Buffy* devotees only.

ARION BERGER

LAURA CANTRELL

WHEN THE ROSES BLOOM AGAIN ★★★

DIESEL ONLY

Misreading her map, the anti-Shania Twain pursues old country verities in New York



Not the Tremblin' Kind, the debut CD from this New York throwback who doubles as a roots-music DJ, was hailed for its austere vision and stoic honesty. Cantrell mostly repeats the approach here, both in the songs she writes and the ones she chooses from a clique of smart New York alt-country writers —

notably Dan Prater and Dave Shramm. Yet a shade of satisfaction has gone missing. Some songs lack the lyrical or musical subtlety required to offset her dry, straightforward style, and

Sarah Michelle Gellar reacts to *Scooby Doo* reviews.

Fred Prouser/Reuters/Newscom (Morrison), Kobal Collection (Gellar)

Hair Care Bunch

After 93 million records sold, Bon Jovi want to be Meaningful

BON JOVI

BOUNCE ★★★

ISLAND

WAR — WHAT IS it good for? Igniting an earnest streak in songwriters, certainly. Toby Keith, Neil Young, Steve Earle and Bruce Springsteen have all been inspired by September 11 in different ways, and now it's Jon Bon Jovi's turn.

Bounce isn't as explicit as Springsteen's *The Rising*, but the specter of related events looms large. "That was my brother lost in the rubble/That was my sister lost in the crush," he sings on the clenched-fist opener, "Undivided." "Everyday," the first single, counsels resolve and a steely fortitude, while "Hook Me Up" ponders the peril of a young Palestinian who's under siege by the Israelis.

The songs still surge to Richie Sambora's slick riffing and choruses seemingly designed by a drive-time think tank. Why expect anything else from a band that made the blue-collar struggle of "Living on a Prayer" sound like celebration? If AOR is a science, Bon Jovi are professors.

Even when riled, Jon-Bon can't forget playlist strictures — "It ain't karma/It ain't luck/Me, I don't give a..." [drum shot!] he growls on the politely raucous title track.

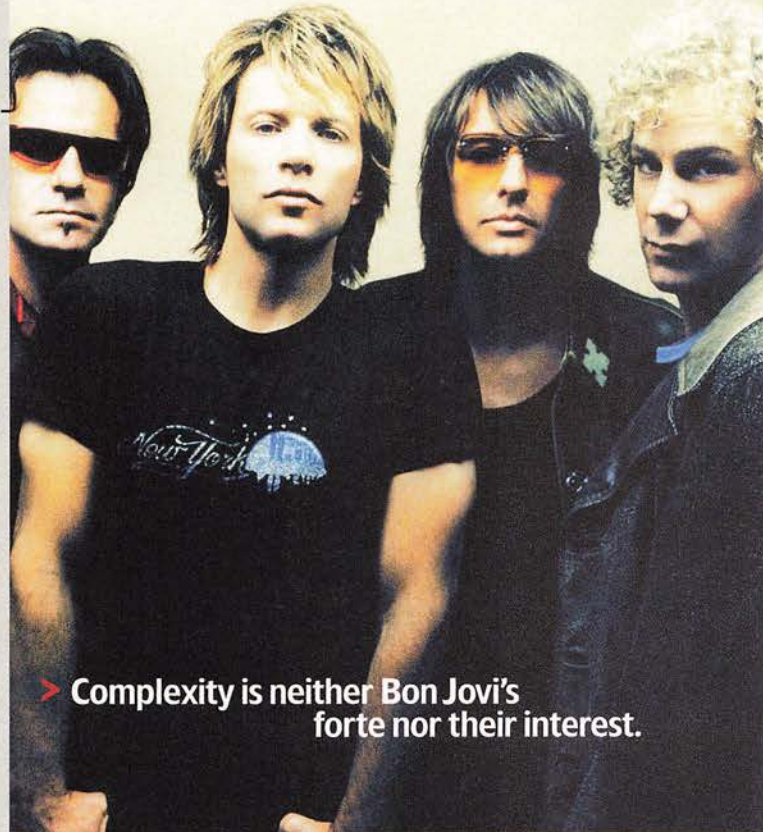
It's not all self-righteous heaviness. Remember Journey's weepie "Open Arms"? "All About Loving You" suggests Bon Jovi does.

Bounce, ultimately, is more of the same, with a light sprinkling of "relevance" on top. Complexity is neither Bon Jovi's forte nor their interest, and the underlying messages here — individual heroism, community, *luuvv* and big, rockin' guitars will get us through hard times — already propelled the band to magazine covers 15 years ago. *Bounce* may sound flat in a few years, but by then its job — to see another million people, and rock them all — will be done. MICHAEL LEONARD

JON BON JOVI'S CURRENT LISTENING

▶ DAVE MATTHEWS BAND
BUSTED STUFF RCA

▶ DAVE PIRNER
FACES AND NAMES ULTIMATUM



➤ Complexity is neither Bon Jovi's forte nor their interest.



Eric Clapton:
"Kumbaya, my
lord..."

appropriately bare arrangements are too often compromised by swirls of bumptious pedal steel — the offending instrument played by Jon Graboff, whose delicately sympathetic mandolin picking marks Cantrell's best tracks. Margins for error are small when simplicity is all.

PHIL SUTCLIFFE

CHARLENE

CHARLENE ★★★★★

SHARK ATTACK

Ambitious, Anglophilic shoe-gazers mold sonic overload into warm, affecting pop

Charlene call themselves a three-piece orchestra, and it's not hard to see why. The Boston group's self-titled debut piles guitars upon guitars upon keyboards upon drums upon electronic effects upon *even more* guitars, creating a lush tapestry of swirling dream-pop evoking classic British shoegazers Spiritualized and the Jesus and Mary Chain. *Charlene's* hypnotic centerpiece — an untitled seven-and-a-half-minute instrumental — features a lone guitar picking out a twangy melody as a wall of fuzz advances and recedes behind it. On "Stunner," their noisy feedback yields a cheery jingle tapped out on a xylophone. Such sonic weirdness abounds here, but somehow, Charlene turn brooding art-rock into pure pop candy.

DAVID PEISNER

ERIC CLAPTON

ONE MORE CAR, ONE MORE RIDER ★★

REPRISE

A legendary blues guitar slows to a near crawl. Creeeeeeeak!

Eric Clapton hasn't released a live album since 1992's hit *Unplugged*, but this double CD proves only that

he's gotten older, not better. A grab bag of greatest hits, augmented by songs from *Pilgrim* and *Reptile*, his recent studio clunkers, *One More Car* offers little in the way of excitement. True, "She's Gone" and "Have You Ever Loved a Woman?" show Clapton can still make his guitar weep, but he rarely sustains the moments of passion, and keyboardists Billy Preston and David Sancious often outsolo the old master. Many songs, like the perennial "Layla," are performed so bombastically as to become parodies of themselves. The festivities conclude with a creaking version of "Over the Rainbow," in which Clapton finally turns into your grandfather.

HOWARD MASSEY

LES CLAYPOOL

THE LES CLAYPOOL FROG BRIGADE PRESENTS PURPLE ONION ★★

PRAWN SONG

Highly eccentric Primus bassist releases (what else?) highly eccentric solo record

Les Claypool is undoubtedly a bass virtuoso, but before that, he's an oddball. His eccentricity — cartoon voices, absurd lyricism, wild noises — carried Primus to multiplatinum success behind quirky rockers like "Wynona's Big Brown Beaver." Now, without a band to accommodate, he gets truly freaky. Where Primus made strange pop, solo Claypool seeks something more avant-garde, letting bass junk overwhelm his tracks. Still, he salvages a few tunes from the mess and occasionally offers inspired funk ("Whamola"). Claypool works best with collaborators, especially on the jammy "Buzzards of Green Hill," with Gov't Mule guitarist Warren Haynes. As Primus showed, weirdness benefits from counterbalance.

CHRISTOPHER O'CONNOR →

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COOLIO

EL COOL MAGNIFICO ***

D3

Former rap crossover king has turned into a weakest link — goodbye!

On his fourth record, rapper/actor/game-show contestant Coolio rhymes about street life rather than backstage life. And that's a shame, because at this point, another track about Glocks on the block is far less original than the real dirt on his *Celebrity Fear Factor* and *Weakest Link* appearances. Coolio's great hits — "Gangster's Paradise," "Fantastic Voyage" — mixed hot samples with tales of his reformation from thug life. Now he's 39, and his music recycles familiar ideas. The brassy, Latin-tinged "Shake It Up" is Ludacris's "Roll Out" with all the catchiness but none of the quirk, and "Sunshine" is hip-hop talkin' blues à la Everlast. The result of such calculated chart-jacking: an album that's never less than competent, and never quite inspired.

GREG BEATO

SHEMEKIA COPELAND

TALKING TO STRANGERS

ALLIGATOR

From Pink's generation, an old-school blues belter

Shemekia Copeland has the blues in her blood — literally: The 23-year-old singer is the daughter of the late Texas guitar hound Johnny Copeland. Like Dad, she takes a tradition-steeped route to the blues. With a muscular voice schooled in Koko Taylor, she steamrolls through her third album of hard-edged tales of love and lust. "If you love me, say it out loud," she demands in the soulful "Don't Whisper," while "Ka-Ching" finds Copeland hitting her wrongdoing man where it hurts: in his bank account. Add some tasteful, New Orleans-tinged arrangements and ever-funky keyboards from producer Dr. John, and Copeland sustains her reputation as one of the most promising young blues artists around.

BILLY ALTMAN

DAVID CROSS

SHUT UP YOU FUCKING BABY!

SUB POP

Short, bald comic tries to assassinate the president — with jokes!

As thousands of people who adored HBO's *Mr. Show* know, David Cross is a



Sadly, David Cross really wanted chocolates.

foulmouthed sage whose observations are both on the money and spit-up-through-the-nose funny. On this two-CD set, recorded live earlier this year, Cross fearlessly aims at the political and cultural sacred cows that were once the terrain of George Carlin. Like Carlin, Cross finds absurdity, breaks it down and wrings it out, leaving little unexamined. He connects more often than not, railing against commercialized patriotism, organized religion, the "war" on terrorism and politics. He saves his best for the president, whom he believes has had a permanent hall pass since last September 11. "We all treat him like he came in third place at the Special Olympics," Cross notes. "He's the same moron he was on [September 10]."

ERIK HIMMELSBACH

THE DAMN PERSONALS

STANDING STILL IN THE USA

BLUR

Old wave, new wave — it's still rock & roll to these Boston throwbacks

Garage rockers, indie kings, punk metallers — there's a lot of variety to the Damn Personals' sound. *Standing Still in the USA* broadens the spectrum of their debut, *Driver Driver*, without ditching basics: The songs are still about girls, drugs and accidental death, with riffs you can whistle and tunes that sound like screaming. From the charming (really) "Fucking in NYC" to the punk-esque "Amphetamine

Rifles," the Damn Personals write songs that shout at strangers from atop enormous steel bridges of guitar, held together by Ken Cook's Boston-strangled vocals. Confident, sexy and, in its way, a miniature greatest hits of everything that's good in modern rock.

DAVID QUANTICK

DESTROYER

THIS NIGHT ****

MERGE

Brainiac glam-rock that's poetry-friendly, Canadian and proud

You could run out of digits counting the Smiths references on Destroyer's fifth album, but it's not as if the bands sound alike. It's the Smiths' theoretical trappings that interest songwriter Dan Bejar: mutated glam, kinked-up strumming, complicated poetry, *ba-ba-ba* background vocals and a singing voice you're not likely to hear on mainstream radio. His artiest gestures and his funniest are often the same (one song is called "Students Carve Hearts Out of Coal"), and his shimmering, audacious arrangements carry him above the pretension. With its amateur orchestra quoting Samuel Barber's "Adagio for Strings," "Trembling Peacock" is a

smartly ambiguous tribute to Bejar's native Vancouver.

DOUGLAS WOLK

DJ/RUPTURE

MINESWEEPER SUITE ****

TIGERBEAT 6

Harvard grad juggles Timbaland, tablas and turntables on world-hopping mix

DJ/rupture's frenetic mash-ups and mixes are like a Travel Channel version of *MTV Party to Go*. Timbaland's twitchy beats are popular from the South Bronx to Bombay, but that's not true for India's hitmakers, despite some heavy 3 A.M. rotation on public-access cable. The Boston-born turntablist gives equal attention to both on his second release, scrambling Top 40 hip-hop with Jamaican, North African and Southeast Asian exports. "High Resolution" pummels Aaliyah vocals with momentary bits of 112's raunchy "Peaches and Cream" and a noisy storm of drum & bass; the next moment, serpentine Egyptian melodies segue into what sounds like an Indian bagpipe (Mutamassik's "Babomb"). In a pounding, steadily shifting environment of hip-hop, jungle and bhangra beats, DJ/rupture explores the places where diverse musical cultures meet and part ways. Three continents feel the bounce of his club-thumping touch.

JONAH WEINER

THE DONNAS

SPEND THE NIGHT ****

ATLANTIC

California's barely legal all-girl punk-metal gum smackers rock on, and on

The Donnas have made the same album five times in nine years (and they're still only 23!), and thankfully, their major-label debut is no surprise jazz-fusion departure. *Spend the Night's* terrific riot of mean guitar licks, snotty vocals and hilariously dumb lyrics about car sex and getting stoned lands them somewhere between Mötley Crüe and the Ramones (with added estrogen). Whether they're kicking out gate-crashers ("Who Invited You"), exhorting boys to get naked ("Take It Off") or railing against b.o. ("Dirty Denim"), they're like the best party band at the best party you can imagine. Yes, you've heard it all before. Yes, it's still fun. No, don't argue.

APRIL LONG

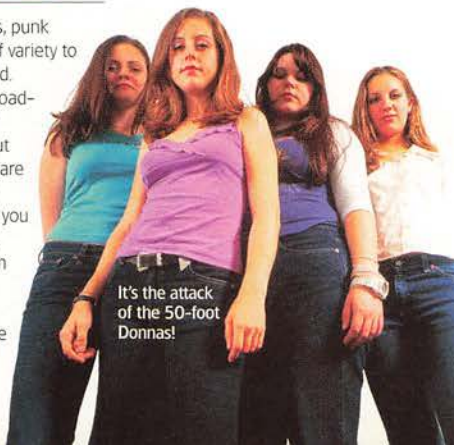
EVE

EVE-OLUTION ***

RUFF RYDERS/INTERSCOPE

Ruff Ryders' "first lady" tries on pretty pop, but can't conceal her inner thug

As the female MC with the highest expectations weighing on her →

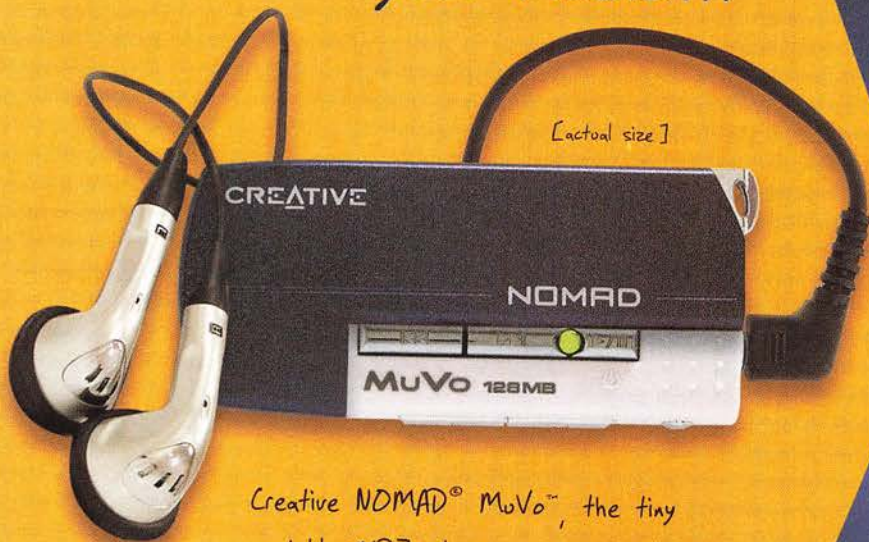


It's the attack of the 50-foot Donnas!

CREATIVE NOMAD

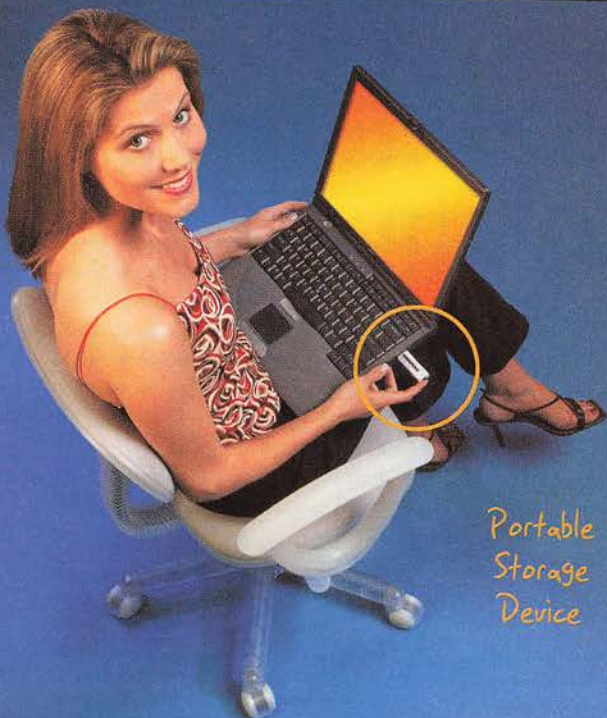
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spaghetti-strapped shoulders, Eve Jihan Jeffers had to make a choice for *Eveolution*, her third album since 1999: keep moving in a pop direction (as on last year's "Let Me Blow Ya Mind"), or focus on representing the sexy tomboys of hip-hop (the crux of Eve's oeuvre). Not surprisingly, Eve chooses both. Vocals from nouveau pop diva Alicia Keys ensure heavy rotation for "Gangsta Lovin'," and producer Bink swipes a catchy Bobby McFerrin arrangement for the escapist "Ride Away." But *Eveolution*'s best is the roughneck stuff, like "Double R What": Producer Swizz Beatz uses a fail-safe track from Schoooly D to bring the grit out of Eve and her fellow Ruff Ryder guest MCs, Jadakiss and Styles. In all, Eve achieves enough balance to continue reigning as hip-hop's most popular femme-fatale MC.

MILES MARSHALL LEWIS

EYES ADRIFT

EYES ADRIFT ★★

SPINART

Alt-rock supergroup sets the Wayback Machine to 1993 — with diminishing returns

Finally, alt-rock has its own high-pedigree version of Blind Faith: Eyes Adrift singer-guitarist Kurt Kirkwood led the Meat Puppets, drummer Bud Gaugh played in Sublime and bassist Krist Novoselic was in, uh, Sweet 75, as well as Nirvana. Pedigrees don't make records, though. These guys are accomplished musicians, but none of them has made a great album since the early '90s, and putting them together doesn't generate much chemistry. Except for the formless 15-minute closer, "Pasted," this debut sounds like any one of the hundreds of guitar-seriousness bands that arose in the wake of *Nevermind*. And just when Kirkwood's sun-bleached guitar starts generating a bit of energy, he lets loose a half-assed lyric like "They put flowers on your grave/JonBenet!"

DOUGLAS WOLK

ROSE FALCON

BREAKABLE ★★

COLUMBIA

Debut from 18-year-old prodigy whose dad knows Bon Jovi. Really!

It's a crafty idea: Take the hip, empowered aesthetic of Fiona Apple and Alanis Morissette, strip it of all references to relationship breakdown and sexual entanglement and pack the lyrics with themes that'll resonate with 14-year-old girls who are starting to grow out of Britney. Ergo Rose Falcon, whose debut grapples simplistically with such earth-shaking issues as school bullying ("Yellow Bus") and how ads make you feel bad about yourself ("Looks Are



Eve: "I'd like to speak to J.P. Freely."

Everything"). The neon pop of the lead single, "Fun," might provide Falcon with a springboard, but the fact that every song was cowritten by her dad, Billy, an '80s hard-rocker championed by Jon Bon Jovi, speaks volumes: Even teens will sniff out the overwhelming whiff of market-driven cynicism.

JOHN HARRIS

THE FLAMING SIDEBURNS

THE FLAMING SIDEBURNS SAVE ROCK'N'ROLL ★★

JETSET

Killer new garage rock from the land of Renny Harlin and Finlandia vodka

First came Sweden's Hives, with their unlikely claim that they were recruited through the mail by an elusive songwriting mentor. Now, hot on their heels, come Finnish hopefuls the Flaming Sideburns, with a tale of having started life in 1965 as a support act for Little Richard. This fantasy is chronologically doubtful, though the music renders it

Eyes Adrift: It's Nirvana's dads!



plausible: On this U.S. debut, they choogle along in frenetic Stones-meet-AC/DC fashion, as though they had played together for almost four decades. Their utter lack of originality and singer Speedo Martinez's anonymous sub-iggy vocals drag down the album eventually. But a few exceptional songs — opener "Loose My Soul," the no-nonsense riff-o-rama of "World Domination" — reconfirm the suspicion that right now, no one's producing good old-fashioned American rock & roll quite like the Scandinavians.

CLARK COLLIS

GOOD CHARLOTTE

THE YOUNG AND THE HOPELESS ★

EPIC

MTV stars Benji and Joel's band bravely brings punk rock to the mall

These two young Maryland brothers do their best to sound like SoCal skate punks, except they don't swear — they don't want to offend their mom, they say. The result is dime-a-dozen suburban pop-punk, insipid high school confidantals and standard complaints about dysfunctional families; think Blink-182 lite, featuring bitter insights like "Girls don't like boys; girls like cars and money." Good Charlotte's twist is the occasional mid-tempo quasi-ballad, which, in a genre as tightly circumscribed as this, actually passes for formal innovation. They may have energy to burn, but *Hopeless*'s copycat songwriting, big-bucks



That's right, Gov't Mule, we're talking to you.

LAST ALBUM YOU BOUGHT?



FOREST WHITAKER
Host of The Twilight Zone



ORISHAS
A LO CUBANO
UNIVERSAL

"It's like Buena Vista Social Club with rap inside it. This group is really hot."

production and whiny lyrics have all the edge of a butter knife.

MICHAEL AZERRAD

GOV'T MULE

THE DEEP END VOLUME 2 ★★

MMG/ATO

Southern rockers corner the market on overskilled bassists

Faced with replacing a deceased bass player back in 2000, Southern-rock trio Gov't Mule looked around and

figured, why use one when 12 will do? The roster includes bassists as diverse as Metallica's Jason Newsted, the Meters' George Porter Jr. and Me'shell Ndegéocello, but each meshes right into the band's boogie-rock. Not that the Mule always

stick to form: A remake of Tower of Power's "What Is Hip?" scalds with instrumental flash; "Trying Not to Fall" is a dead ringer for Aerosmith's "The Train Kept a-Rollin'"; and "Babylon Turnpike" limply imitates hard bop. *The Deep End* proves that music once considered the domain of outlaws and rednecks is now as universal and unthreatening as Mickey Mouse and McDonald's are.

KEN MICALLEF

ADAM GREEN

GARFIELD ★★

ROUGH TRADE/SANCTUARY

Lo-fi hero unleashes his inner child — who's quite the potty-mouth. No wonder it's so hard to find a sitter

Adam Green, whose New York "antifolk" ensemble the Moldy Peaches balance brutal honesty, emotional vulnerability and childlike silliness, has apparently decided the first two require too much work. On *Garfield*, his (intentionally) indifferent strumming is mostly the backdrop for tedious gross-outs and hey!-it-rhymes non sequiturs. Underwrought and overindulgent, this Weblog of an album has its moments — but so does a conversation with a →

The Man Is Back

Cash sings the Beatles, Paul Simon and . . . Depeche Mode?

JOHNNY CASH

AMERICAN IV: THE MAN COMES AROUND ★★★

AMERICAN/LOST HIGHWAY

PUT THIS IN THE "things you thought you'd never hear" file: Johnny Cash singing Depeche Mode's 1990 new-wave hit "Personal Jesus." Straight up, with no postmodern smirk.

For the first few lines, the Man in Black gropes for a handle on the lumbering shuffle by the Men in Black Eyeliner. But his droll, intensely focused delivery transforms what could have been a ridiculous William Shatner laugh riot into a devastating portrait of an evangelist with a messiah complex.

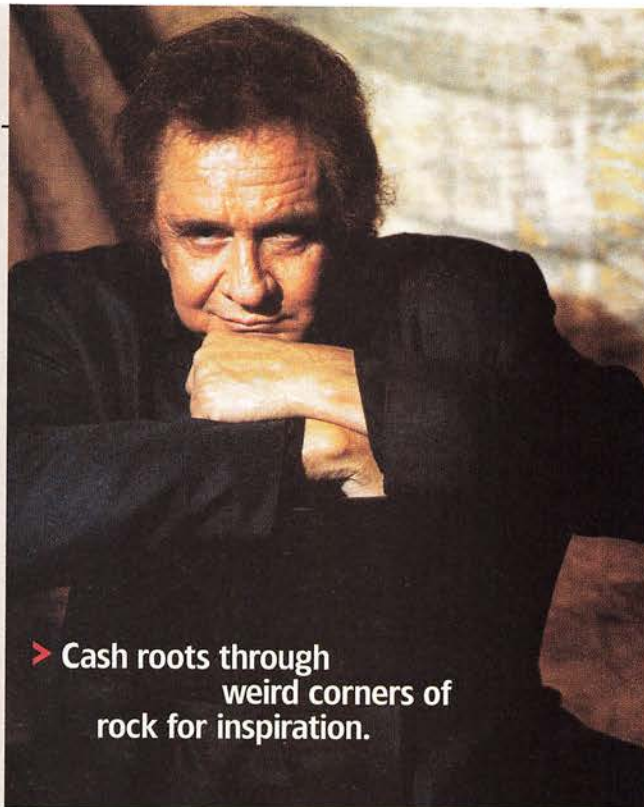
His blunt, hauntingly direct performances open up new perspectives on a song. He captures the dire masochism that lurks behind Nine Inch Nails' "Hurt" as though he's had firsthand experience, then serves up a version of "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face" that's filled with awe.

At 70, Cash puts the road-roughened weariness in his voice to particularly good use here, delivering the Beatles' "In My Life" as a woeful, long-look-back reverie.

Despite Rick Rubin's careful production, not everything here is great. Simon & Garfunkel's "Bridge Over Troubled Water" feels labored even before Fiona Apple slides in to sing backup, and standbys "Danny Boy" and "The Streets of Laredo" seem perfunctory. Still, there's something marvelous about Cash rooting through weird corners of rock for inspiration, and his spirit makes these songs newly alive, each poignant in a different way. It's enough to make you want to reach out and touch faith. *TOM MOON*

JOHNNY CASH'S CURRENT LISTENING

- ▶ VARIOUS ARTISTS
BLACK GOSPEL EXPLOSION WARNER CHRISTIAN
- ▶ VARIOUS ARTISTS
BLUEGRASS FROM HEAVEN CPM



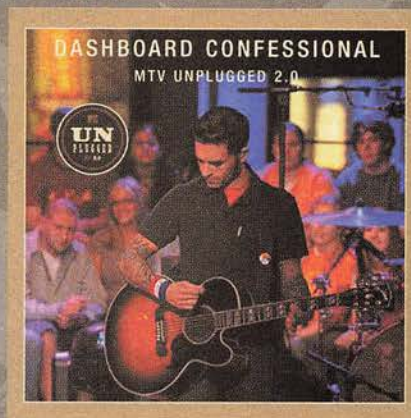
➤ Cash roots through weird corners of rock for inspiration.

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4-year-old who's just learned how to say *poop*. And unlike Green, the kid probably won't mention killing his girlfriend or vomiting up spooge-covered crackers. The album is redeemed from uselessness by the synth-pop charmer "Dance With Me."

JOHN RATLIFF

HEATHER HEADLEY

THIS IS WHO I AM ★★

RCA

Broadway star of *The Lion King* and Elton John's *Aida* hires top soul producers, falls asleep at the mic

There's a real mystery at the heart of modern R&B. Considering all the storming up-tempo tracks around, why are the ballads always so awful? The plague of melodically uninspired, dreadfully overwrought mawk-athons sadly infects the debut from Trinidadian prodigy Heather Headley, a Tony Award winner. With help from chart-hogging producers Jam & Lewis (Janet Jackson) and Dallas Austin (Pink), her beat-driven numbers are much better: The mean, smart single "He Is" rocks the block; the brooding groover "Sista Girl" warns a teenager against casual sex but, paradoxically, sounds pretty horny. Then, near the end, with the sly, sinuous "Why

Should I Cry," comes a shock: a decent ballad! Obviously, though, it's followed by another bad one.

STEVE LOWE

ISIS

OCEANIC ★★

IPECAC

Stoner rock lives in the hands of these Boston volume masters. Fire up the bong, *duuuude!*

As a few bands have shown — Kyuss, High on Fire and Soilent Green, for example — there is much work yet to be done with slow, heavy rock. It doesn't have to ape Black Sabbath and stay in one chord until the glaciers melt. Isis, a Boston quintet, is hammering out an original angle: as loud as a mortar shelling, and as inward as a seance. The songs on *Oceanic* — the band's second full-length album — simmer slowly, each of them pinned together with a few primary riff sections. There are frequent changes in dynamics, and few intrusions of delicacy. The band works at juxtaposing light and heavy: Delicate keyboard drones, indistinct speaking voices and mysterious homemade samples abound, but they sit among fat, low-end guitars and throat-shredding scream-singing.

BEN RATLIFF



Syleena Johnson: Now that's a driver's-license photo.

IVY

GUESTROOM ★★

MINTY FRESH

Lounge-poppers revisit old pals

Releasing an album of covers when hardly anybody has heard *your* songs seems like a bad idea. But for Ivy, a moody Euro-New York pop trio with more taste than mainstream savoir faire,

irrational concepts can lead to alchemy. New versions of chart hits from '80s England fill much of *Guestroom*, and Ivy's intimate interpretations elevate this above mere nostalgia for Anglophiles. Dominique Durand's low-key cool sucks the life out of the Ronettes' girl-group classic "Be My Baby." But her pouty French accent flips the Cure's "Let's Go to Bed" into flirty pillow talk, and playfully entices other big-haired Brits into a boudoir of hushed dreams.

BARRY WALTERS

JETS TO BRAZIL

PERFECTING LONELINESS ★★

JADE TREE

Tense and frowning, emo standard-bearers rattle on for over an hour

It happens: Every roaring rock songwriter eventually feels the need to get deep, melancholic and staggeringly long-winded (c.f. Bob Mould's *Workbook*, Iggy Pop's *Avenue B* and Paul Westerberg's entire solo career). It's now happened to Jets to Brazil's emo-ing, Blake Schwarzenbach. What he's attempting is lush, emotionally revelatory pop songs with extra rock & roll oomph; what he ends up with is 67 minutes of plaintive whine, few melodies worthy of JTB's rep, several piano ballads too many and a couple of

Rebel Yell

Steve Earle defends Taliban fighter on a "pro-American" album

STEVE EARLE

JERUSALEM ★★

ARTEMIS

ORNERY, UNPREDICTABLE, radical — that was Steve Earle's reputation even before he wrote a song in defense of the most despised man in the U.S.

Earle sings the sympathetic ballad "John Walker's Blues" in the voice of John Walker Lindh, the American Taliban fighter, and imagines him as a disenchanted idealist who rejects MTV and a shallow consumer culture for Islam. While the song doesn't make Lindh a hero, it shows that Earle shares his subject's contempt for current American values.

From his 1986 debut as a Bruce Springsteen-inspired country-rocker, Earle has gotten gruffer, rawer and more political, staging benefit shows against the death penalty and describing his politics as Marxist. He calls *Jerusalem* "the most pro-American record I've ever made" — but full of sedition, it's pro-American only in the rebellious tradition of Abbie Hoffman or Lenny Bruce.

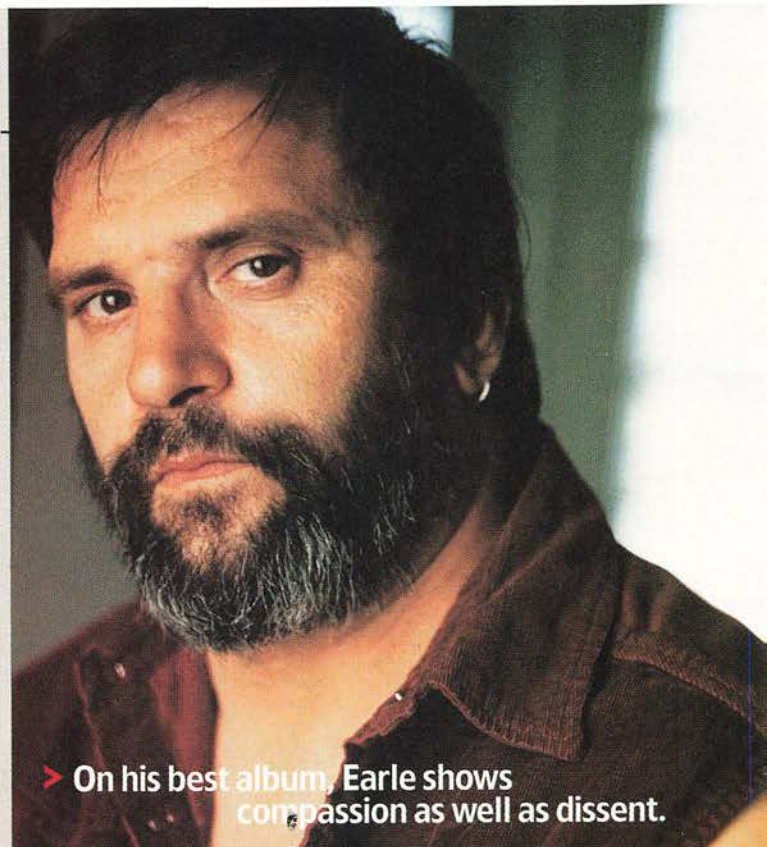
If you buried Bob Dylan's *Blood on the Tracks* in a graveyard for 200 years and then dug it up, it would sound like this corroded, bottom-heavy music. In a disgusted drawl, Earle describes a country where politicians fight drugs but ignore global warming, HMOs commit murder and baby boomers trade their idealism for an expensive sedan.

Earle follows his indignation with sympathetic story-songs about the downtrodden, each full of lovely touches and strong choruses: "What's a Simple Man to Do?", the confession of an immigrant who volunteers to be a drug mule, has a hot Tex-Mex organ riff, and the great "Go Amanda" features a mid-period Stones guitar riff in a song urging a woman to leave her man. On his best album, Earle proves that his songwriting gifts include compassion as well as dissent. ROB TANNENBAUM

STEVE EARLE'S CURRENT LISTENING

▶ BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN
THE RISING COLUMBIA

▶ EMINEM
THE EMINEM SHOW INTERSCOPE



> On his best album, Earle shows compassion as well as dissent.



DEREK FISHER
Los Angeles
Lakers guard



NELLY NELLYVILLE
FORETEL/UNIVERSAL

"I identify with the slang and what he's rappin' about. Just lookin' at his style, he's a great artist."

decent rockers. Both the songs and the album drastically overstay their welcome, like a bitter drunk at a party who decides to explain exactly how it all went wrong.

DOUGLAS WOLK

SYLEENA JOHNSON

CHAPTER 2: THE VOICE ☆☆

JIVE

Chicago R&B singer finds love, loses plot

Love, we know, is a wonderful thing, but sometimes it makes for appalling records. While Syleena Johnson's debut, *Chapter 1: Love, Pain & Forgiveness*, tackled heartache with impressive maturity, her newfound bliss makes *Chapter 2* as glutinous an experience as swimming in honey. Packed with the kind of tooth-rotting platitudes that should be confined to Hallmark cards, the album reaches a nadir on "Now That I Got You," in which Johnson, daughter of '60s R&B star Syl, asks her hubby, "Do you need a massage? Maybe something to eat?" At this rate, *Chapter 3* will hymn the joys of baking cakes and shopping for baby clothes.

DORIAN LYNSEY

JOSH JOPLIN GROUP

THE FUTURE THAT WAS

☆☆☆

ARTEMIS

Atlanta's smart-ass singer-songwriter lets loose with brainy pop magic

Like that cherubic school kid who scored brownie points with the teacher while you were busy doodling, Atlanta's Josh Joplin is a wordy, perky, smarty-pants singer-songwriter, but one whose cutting insights are actually satisfying. Sounding like the mutant son of Michael Stipe and a young Elvis Costello, Joplin is a master of zippy melodies and wrenching, thought-provoking lyrics. He attacks American narcissism in the scathing "The Wonderful Ones" and forecasts

a rock & roll future in "Siddhartha's of Suburbia." Joplin sings pleasantly about his nowhere-man status in "Happy at Last" — surely the sunniest song ever written about failing in the music biz. With such clever craft, Joplin may soon find himself writing songs about success instead.

KEN MICALFEE

KENNY G

PARADISE ☆☆

ARISTA

The best-selling "jazz" saxophonist of all time: The G stands for gooney

Since his first professional engagements (in Barry White's band), the artist born Kenneth Gorelick has spent a quarter-century oiling away any friction left in the soul saxophone genre. He no longer walks to the studio; he glides there on a thin layer of Canoe-scented sex lube. *Paradise* offers few highlights. The opener, "Brazil," spoils some intense soprano sax with a quasi-Bahian percussion track; the rock-gospel "Midnight Magic" promises tenor sax excitement, but fades out when the fun starts; on "All the Way," an R&B cliché dictionary, Brian McKnight closes his mouth and sings through his nose instead. "I want you baby more than words can say, I gotta have you in each and every way." The horror, the horror.

BEN BRANDT

MARK KNOPFLER

THE RAGPICKER'S DREAM

☆☆☆

WARNER BROS.

Solo album from ex-Dire Straits frontman should not be listened to while operating heavy machinery

One of the advantages of being as rich as God — or, at least, as rich as

the man who made *Brothers in Arms*, Dire Straits' world-conquering 1985 album — is that you can write whatever the hell you want without worrying about the consequences. Which is pretty much what Mark Knopfler's been doing for the last decade. Here, he tips a hat to the cartoon roadrunner ("Coyote"), explores the world of sideshow freaks ("Devil Baby") and names his leadoff track for a colloquial greeting guaranteed to bewilder most non-Brits ("Why Aye Man"). If his subject matter is getting stranger, however, his semiacoustic music is comfortably familiar and expert, with "Hill Farmer's Blues" and "Quality Shoe," an homage to "King of the Road," reminiscent of early Dire Straits' soft, loping shuffles.

CLARK COLLIS

LO-HI

SAY IT MORE ☆☆

TIGER STYLE

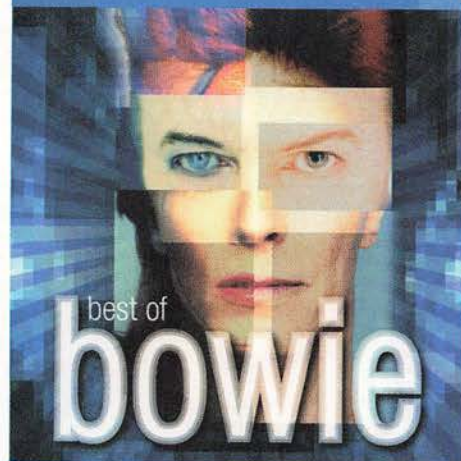
Street-thug New York City blues-rock is fatally marred by world's worst lyrics

Lo-Hi singer-guitarist Hollis Queens used to be the drummer in Boss Hog, and she picked up a lot from her old boss Jon Spencer — the spare, trebly buzz-and-whack of this, their second record, sounds just like latter-day Blues Explosion. Unfortunately, Lo-Hi's riffs are inferior to those of their model, and Queens's lyrics are so dopey it's impossible to take her seriously. (From a song about Lucille Ball: "When we see the reruns they still make us laugh/That's why we love Lucy and she is so famous." And she makes the lines rhyme.) She sings with a cocky sneer, and her confidence is winning, but there's little here besides attitude.

DOUGLAS WOLK →



Josh Joplin Group: smiling because they have no pants on



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LUNA

CLOSE COVER BEFORE STRIKING ★★★

JETSET

NYC foursome follows a dull album with some of its best songs in years

For a decade, New York punk has been Luna's best resource and its biggest hurdle. The Manhattan quartet's six albums draw from Television's dual-guitar hypnosis and the Velvet Underground's churning urgency, leaning on the weird and woozy insomnia of reedy vocalist Dean Wareham to supply its subtle originality. Luna's seven-song *Close Cover Before Striking* mini-CD transcends their last album, the dull, by-the-numbers *Romantica*, with lean hooks that trade urban melancholy for a surprisingly pastoral warmth. "Drunken Whistler," a languid, shimmering instrumental, and "The Alibi," aglow with Indian summer, are Luna's best tracks in years — but Wareham's affectionate, suitably stoned amble through the Rolling Stones' "Waiting on a Friend" seems the offering predestined for hipster-bar airplay.

TODD PRUZAN

J. MASCIS & THE FOG

FREE SO FREE ★★★

ULTIMATUM

Dinosaur Jr. vet still croaks loudly, yields a bombastic ax

For a guy whose voice hovers somewhere between frog and alien, J. Mascis still exudes soul. His hyperbolic sense of melody, burning lead guitar lines and croaking vocals helped distinguish Dinosaur Jr. from other '80s alt-punkers. Mascis sticks to his bombastic Dino formula on this record, but he still impresses with anthemic rockers ("Freedom"), mellower jams ("Someone Said") and bluesy numbers that allow his Neil Young-inspired ax to shine (the moody but fiery title track). Like Andrew W.K. and his party jones, Mascis is hooked on a word: *free*, which shows up in three song titles. It fits, since Mascis — with his ruffled throat and psychedelic squalor — is not a man of restraint.

CHRISTOPHER O'CONNOR

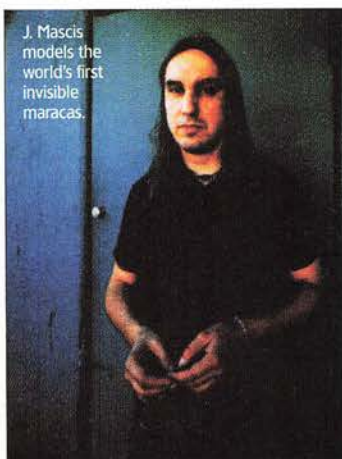
DELBERT McCLINTON

ROOM TO BREATHE ★★★

NEW WEST

Grammy-winning journeyman beloved by bearded, beery Texans finds his groove — at age 62

In an up-and-down recording career that began 30 years ago, Delbert McClinton has released nearly two dozen albums on more labels than he'd care to (or probably can) remember.



J. Mascis models the world's first invisible maracas.

Consistency has never been his strength, but this follow-up to last year's Grammy-winning *Nothing Personal* finds him hitting on all six cylinders for the second consecutive time. His blue-eyed Texas R&B, tinged with country, exudes the knowing wit ("Same Kind of Crazy") and wisdom ("Everything I Know About the Blues") of a man who's been around. With sharp, succinct ensemble playing and grooves deep enough to bury whole audiences, the autumnal McClinton is shaping up to be the best McClinton of all.

JOHN MORTLAND

JAMES McMURTRY

SAINT MARY OF THE WOODS ★★★

SUGAR HILL

Gifted Texas songwriter with bigshot dad looks across the farmlands, sees Starbucks and lots of crank

Great things were expected from James McMurtry: He could dazzle with analogy, metaphor and other lit-class devices, and his auspicious lineage (he's the son of novelist Larry McMurtry, who wrote *Lonesome Dove*) helped corral John

Mellencamp to produce his 1989 debut. But pop music has no particular use for analogy, and McMurtry's implacable, kicked-dog voice proved an acquired taste. *Saint Mary of the Woods* is the sixth in a series of barbed rock records, as terse as Hank Williams or Raymond Carver, on which disillusion battles with determination — and usually loses. In prickly ballads and indignant, Stones-like rockers, McMurtry portrays a dismaying rural South that's been "paved with cement," overrun with cheap speed, hypocrisy, broken beer bottles, lame hearts, for sale signs and Starbucks outlets. His language still dazzles.

ROB TANNENBAUM

MEAT BEAT MANIFESTO

RUOK? ★★

!RUN

Politically minded electronica pioneer holes up in the studio, doesn't notice there's a war on

This really should be a Meat Beat moment. Back in the late '80s, Jack Dangers was the original left-wing techno producer, filling his sample-heavy tracks with anticapitalist screeds. But now, the man behind Meat Beat Manifesto has picked a time of war to release an utterly competent album that's devoid of politics, not to mention any genuinely exciting studio ideas. The best thing here is the DJ Z-Trip collaboration "What Does It All Mean?", a spooky collage of hip-hop beats, blues guitar, choral singing and hectic scratching. Had it come out two years ago, the track would have pleased DJ Shadow fans who were tired of the years-long wait between albums. As it is, the track can still please those tired of waiting for the end of this uninspired album.

JEFF SALAMON

Only one member of Luna will ever be asked to pose naked.



BUDDY MILLER

MIDNIGHT AND LONESOME ★★★

HIGHTONE

Alt-country songwriter, steeped in tradition and misery

Unlike his alt-country peers, Buddy Miller sings for people who drink Pabst Blue Ribbon without irony. A top Nashville songwriter, he produces Emmylou Harris, plays guitar with Steve Earle and records with his wife, Julie. Miller looks like a trucker, and even sings like one, belting with earthbound verve. His fourth solo album is full

of songs about hearts chicken-fried in misery. There's plenty of hard-rocking revelry here — the horny "When It Comes to You" almost seems sung by Little Buddy — but sure as Sunday morning follows Saturday night, morality and solemnity return. "Quecreek," about salvation and the nine rescued Pennsylvania miners, is an inspired last-minute add that finishes the record.

RJ SMITH

MOUNT SIMS

ULTRA SEX ★★★

EMPEROR NORTON

Sexy L.A. trio makes hot love on top of synthesizers

On this debut, a former model, Matt Sims, and two arty-erotic dancers, Erin Giraud and Lisa Eaton, make an album about techno-sexuality, full of hard beats and soft sells. It's part of a fast-growing new school of old-school new wave, dubbed "electro," although Mount Sims boast a flair for sharp melodic insinuations and machine-tooled sonic hooks that's lacking in their retro peers. Produced by Mickey Petralia, who has worked with the well-known post-folkie sex investigator Beck, the songs on *Ultra Sex* feature come-on lyrics like "I'll lick your attitude/Until your face turns blue." That's from "How We Do," a real percolator that, like the Devo-ish "We Electric," bops around as if pop styles haven't changed one rubber shirt since MTV circa 1982.

JAMES HUNTER

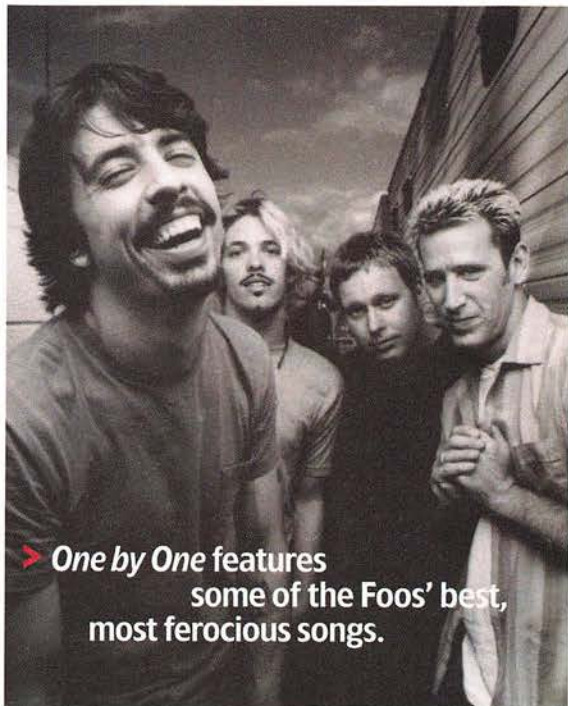
YOUSOU N'DOUR

NOTHING'S IN VAIN (COONO DU RÉÉ) ★★★

NONESUCH

Senegalese legend voyages around the world on a beautiful new record

Yousou N'Dour is the Marvin Gaye of African pop music, a politically →



➤ **One by One** features some of the Foo's best, most ferocious songs.

Back to the Day Job

Fresh off a tour with Queens of the Stone Age, Dave Grohl mixes a bit more metal with his pop

FOO FIGHTERS

ONE BY ONE ★★☆☆

RCA

LIKE THE NICE GUY all the girls want to be "friends" with — as opposed to copulate like overexcited seals with — there has always been an amiable dependability about Dave Grohl. Though he's one of the few original grunge figures who's still relevant when compared to next-generation rockers like the Vines and the Hives, the Foo Fighters inspire fond affection rather than flaming devotion.

The last 12 months have seen the band embroiled in uncharacteristic excitement. First, drummer Taylor Hawkins was hospitalized after a drug overdose. Then Grohl drummed (brilliantly) on tour with the Queens of the Stone Age, which fueled rumors that this fourth Foo Fighters album had been rejected by RCA.

One by One lacks the commercial sheen of 1997's *The Colour and the Shape* (which featured "Monkey Wrench," "My Hero" and "Everlong"), and concludes with the unwieldy eight-minute "Come Back," but it nevertheless features some of

the Foo Fighters' best, most ferocious songs.

Grohl says this album is "all about the energy of playing live," and on the edgy "All My Life" and the riff-drenched "Have It All," the Foo sound like Princesses of the Stone Age. But Grohl's every intense metal rave-up quickly passes into a sweet, breezy melody that makes it hard to take most of the songs all that seriously. Even when he supposedly lays bare his heart on "Have It All," moaning "She drains me/When I'm empty," he seems fairly sanguine about the injury.

Only on the sixth track, the slow-burning "Tired of You," with its repeated cry of "I woke up getting tired of you," does Grohl sustain the kind of emotional depth that seems to come naturally to the Cobains or Vedders of the world. And by then, most listeners may have concluded that they'd be best off staying just good friends. **CLARK COLLIS**

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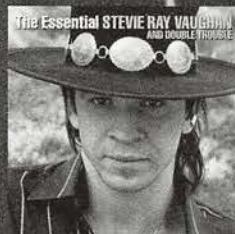
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conscious crooner with a honey-sweet voice full of rhythmic jabs and soaring, prayer-like incantations. *Nothing's in Vain* is one of the most pop-friendly albums he has released in his more than 15-year career, pulling together 13 short songs juiced with good melodies and compassionate lyrics (sung mostly in his native Wolof) about life in Senegal, his homeland. His crack band pulls all kinds of jumpy rhythms out of its folk instruments, and the blend of melodic clarity and free-flowing grooves works particularly well on "Tan Bi" and "Doole." But the real selling point is N'Dour's voice, which can carry you across a continent or rock you to sleep, all in the turn of a phrase.

CHRISTIAN HOARD

NEGATIVLAND

DEATHSENTENCES OF THE POLISHED AND STRUCTURALLY WEAK ★★

SEE/LEAD

Sound collagists who enraged U2 find metal machine music in car graveyards

Best known for their inflammatory 1991 cover of "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For," which earned them a copyright-infringement lawsuit from U2's label, Negativland have been pranking the entertainment industry for



New Order anxiously await the start of beach volleyball season.

two decades. But *Deathsentences*, cleverly packaged to resemble a car manual, is less tunelessly clever than deadly serious. A book of photographs portrays wrecked cars beside the various love letters, hate letters, shopping lists and other documents Negativland's Richard Lyons found in them. The accompanying CD is itself a kind of car crash. Filtered, processed, shredded and pasted, the album's dozen instrumental tracks, including "Born to Loose" and "Hot & Ready," are titled after tunes on a mix tape found in one of the wrecked cars. Negativland's chugging cacophony

seems a fitting and grisly tribute to human road kill.

RICHARD GEHR

THE NEGRO PROBLEM

WELCOME BLACK ★★

SMILE/IMAGE

Smart-alecky L.A. popsters mix a long, cold tumbler of irony on ice

Anybody who calls his band the Negro Problem doesn't mind whatever attention he gets. On his third CD, Stew (Mark Stewart) — the songwriter, singer and

self-described "HNIC" of the Negro Problem — deserves all the attention he can get. He situates *Welcome Black* in a freaky, melancholy cafe where literate hipsters with exquisite record collections dig their fingernails into one another. Drunk on words and sometimes just plain sozzled, he name-drops old television actors and radical theorist Noam Chomsky, and quotes legendary Los Angeles Lakers announcer Chick Hearn while the music blends the party-colored pop of Henry Mancini and XTC. If white kids can rap, why can't a black indie rocker pretend he's Stephen Sondheim?

RJ SMITH

NEW ORDER

BACK TO MINE ★★

DMC

Supercool compilation from Manchester dance-pop innovators

"Back to mine" is an expression used by saucer-eyed British ravers to invite fellow groovers back home for tea and tunes after a night on the tiles. It's also the concept behind a series of chill-out compilations, each programmed by different dance music stars. As you'd imagine, New Order's choices are immaculately tasteful, including Missy Elliott, Can, the Velvet Underground,

Big Phish

Phish offer four Halloween shows that went on for-freakin'-ever

PHISH

10/31/94 ★★

10/31/95 ★★

10/31/96 ★★

10/31/98 ★★

PHISH ARE ninja masters of the special-occasion head fuck. Beginning in 1994, they devoted four Halloween shows over the next five years to un-announced covers of a different classic rock album in its entirety, sandwiched between two generous sets — a format both ridiculous and sublime.

Phish's fans voted for the first selection in 1994, the eponymous 1968 Beatles masterpiece known as the "White Album." By '94, Vermont's own fab four had reached an improvisational pinnacle, and their skills are reflected in the gear-shifting fidelity they brought to the Beatles. They tore through the following year's selection, the Who's *Quadrophenia*, at a time when Phish seemed to rival the explosive spontaneity of the Who's *Live at Leeds* nearly every night, as the disc's two surrounding sets show.

Talking Heads' multiculti *Remain in Light* demonstrated that even white art-rockers could get funky in an African sort of way. Phish were likewise on the verge of an extended wallow in some serious psychedelic "cow funk" (their term) when they extended and embellished the record in 1996.

They skipped Halloween in 1997, but stormed into Las Vegas in '98 to perform the Velvet Underground's 1970 studio swan song, *Loaded*. After jamming out the album to nearly double its original length, Phish returned for a third set that left a confused audience (*Loaded* being both classic and obscure) in a state of high anxiety. With that freaky flourish, Phish pulled the plug on their short, sweet Halloween tradition.

Which didn't stop them from covering Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon* two nights later. But that's another story. RICHARD GEHR

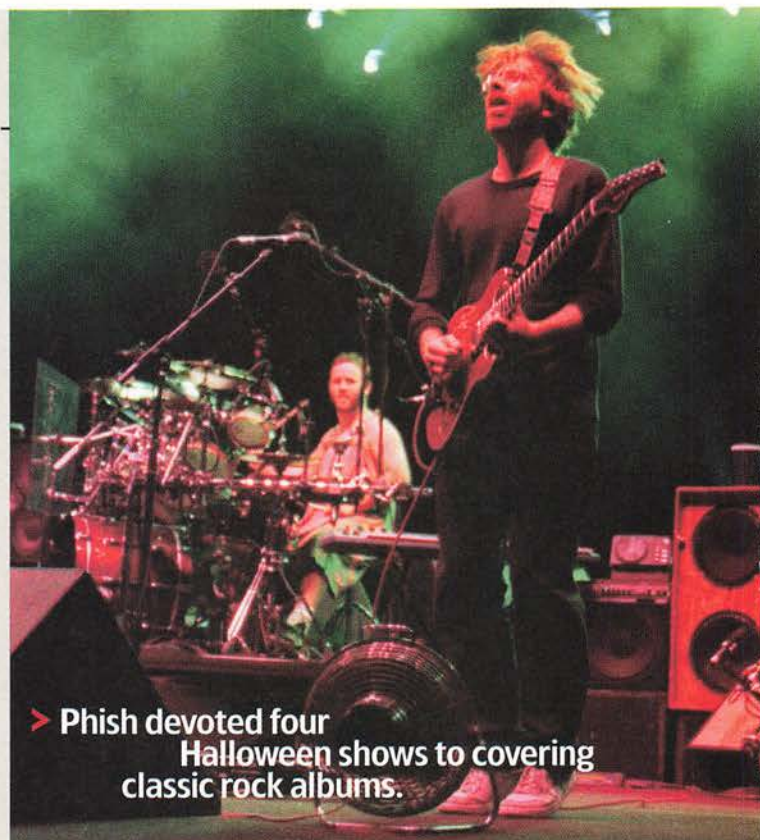
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➤ Phish devoted four Halloween shows to covering classic rock albums.

Roxy Music and Captain Beefheart. Luckily, Cat Stevens's weirdo electro-noodle "Was Dog a Doughnut" (a favorite tune at the New York electro hangout the Funhouse, naturally) manages to evade the hipper-than-thou door policy and, alongside the Groundhogs' 1971 progressive-rock monster "Cherry Red," breaks the pervading atmosphere of glacial Manchester cool. Throw in Joey Beltram's "Energy Flash" — possibly techno's greatest achievement — and you have a collection as quirky and knowing as its curators.

ANDY PEMBERTON

NITTY GRITTY DIRT BAND

**WILL THE CIRCLE BE
UNBROKEN VOL. III** ★★★★★

CAPITOL NASHVILLE

Rock, country and bluegrass legends sit around the campfire, watch Tom Petty's beard grow

Thirty years ago, Nitty Gritty Dirt Band were Los Angeles hippies who made country-rock history by rounding up a host of Grand Ole Opry legends for *Will the Circle Be Unbroken*. A 1989 sequel missed that old-timey magic by a country mile, but the two-CD *Vol. III* could've been recorded the same week as the original. Dwight Yoakam, Willie Nelson and Iris DeMent join *Circle* veterans Earl Scruggs and Doc Watson, and the family spirit is so strong, not even Tom Petty sounds out of place. Highlights include Del McCoury's tumbling "Take Me in Your Lifeboat," Johnny Cash's new "Tears in the Holston River" and every note that comes out of bluegrass titan Jimmy Martin's mouth — but it's all good, honestly.

RICHARD SKANSE

SINÉAD O'CONNOR

SEAN-NÓS NUA ★★

VANGUARD

Pope-hatin', U2-baitin' enfant terrible sings the olden songs of Ireland

Since her second album, *I Do Not Want What I Haven't Got*, Sinéad O'Connor's public statements have become increasingly bizarre as her music has become more traditional. So having declared herself both a lesbian and a priest, she's made an album of traditional Irish ballads. Her haunting voice is perfect for these downcast dirges, and the ethereal modern production touches (the dub rhythms that echo in the background of "The Singing Bird," the gauzy ambient music layered lightly over "Paddy's Lament") make these songs sound as though they come

from a time out of mind — in the words of another famous and difficult folkie, Bob Dylan.

ROBERT LEVINE

ORCHESTRA BAOBAB

SPECIALIST IN ALL STYLES

★★★★

NONESUCH

From Senegal, danceable Afro-jams from Youssou N'Dour-produced band

On the follow-up to their dazzling *Pirates Choice* — recorded in 1982 but not released in the U.S. until last spring — Orchestra Baobab still sound like the world's greatest Afro-Latin band. The 11-piece Senegalese outfit roots its extended jams in the percussion-heavy rhythms of Cuban dance music, yet it's also ineffably African: groove-oriented and free-flowing, with liquid guitar lines, punchy horns and coed singing (mostly in Wolof) that ranges from brassy and commanding to laid-back and mellifluous. "Gnawoe" shows off their ability to handle sparse melancholy, but "Ndongoy Dara," with a joyful chorus and sputtering sax, better indicates what Baobab are all about: a stylistically diverse dance party, half a world away.

CHRISTIAN HOARD



Peaches sucks a butt, so to speak

SEAN PAUL

DUTTY ROCK ★★★★★

VP

A master riddim rider, Sean Paul makes dancehall music for and about sex

Jamaican rapper Sean Paul plays soldier-in-repose on his second LP: an unruffled figure with a lethal sense of rhythm, bedding women with the efficiency of modern weaponry. And like Supercat, his Daddy Cool predecessor in dancehall, Paul's style translates well to

hip-hop fans, as shown by his previous crossover hits, "Infiltrate" and "Deport Them." His latest smash, the ganja anthem "Gimme the Light," is typical of his work: a fluid celebration set to insistent punani-pounding riddims. Tempo-wise, *Dutty Rock* is where hip-hop meets techno. In fact, "Street Respect" could out-techno techno. Paul, of Portuguese, Chinese and Jamaican descent, rides the snare masterfully: His wit and precision make for sweaty sex music. Hint: In Jamaican patois, *dutty* means dirty.

ROBERT MARRIOTT

PEACHES

THE TEACHES OF PEACHES

★★★★

XL/BEGGARS GROUP

Canadian electro-rapper wears pink hot pants, wants you to take them off

"Fuck the Pain Away" isn't a love sonnet. Imagine NIN's classic sex howl "Closer" given an irony pedicure, retold from the receiving end of Trent Reznor's anguished humping, then set to catchy machine beats, guttural keyboard sounds and digital hand claps. It's the most notorious song on her raunchy debut, but for all her dirty talk about "my titties," it's drained of all sensuality. This first U.S. release of *The Teaches of Peaches* includes lots of extras: three fairly pointless remixes and three new tracks: "Keine Melodien" blends blues-rock with disco, while "Casanova" — in which two women share a boy-toy ("If he calls us lesbian/Just slip it in") — is more comical than the rest of the album. Mostly, Peaches' sado-masochistic come-ons sound like a satire of phone-sex services, without the per-minute charges.

JONAH WEINER

PORK TORNADO

PORK TORNADO ★★

RYKODISC

Phish drummer moonlights in a bar band. But where's the beef?

In *Pork Tornado*, five competent musicians pretend to be a bar band. Onstage, the group — which includes Phish's Jon Fishman on drums — drinks a lot of liquor and blasts through crowd-pleasing Sly Stone and James Brown covers. Their debut, unfortunately, is a forgettable bag of funk, country →

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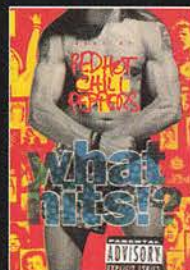
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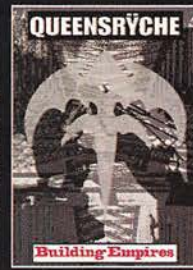
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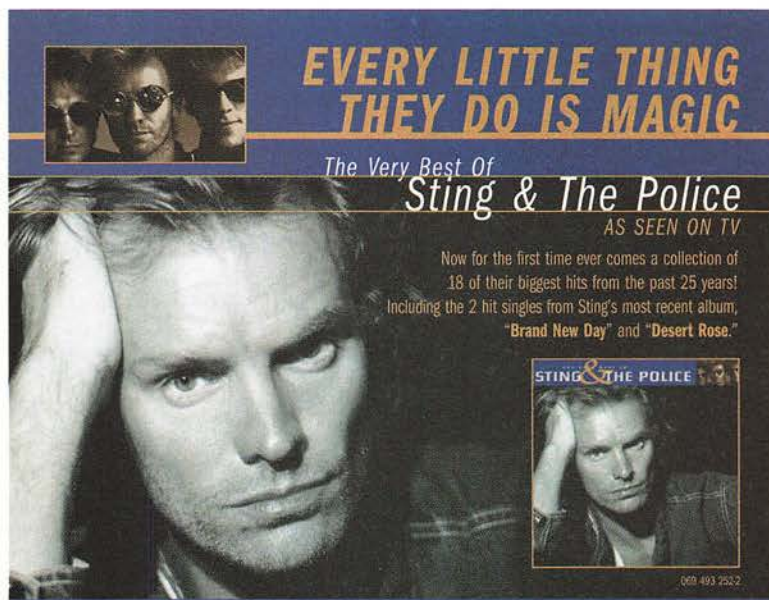


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Pork Tornado?
More like Pork
Tornado!

and Zappa-esque R&B (including the less-shocking-than-they-think "Kiss My Black Ass") that ain't gonna get your bar mitzvah busy. Pork Tornado may argue that we should put "a fat black boy and handicapped old single mother lesbian with a high IQ in the White House," but their lefty-rad politics don't lift up a would-be party album whose musical high point is a minute-long acoustic guitar solo inspired by Federico Fellini.

RICHARD GEHR

RILO KILEY

THE EXECUTION OF
ALL THINGS ★★★★★

SADDLE CREEK

Cheerful indie rock fronted by a child actor from Shelley Long's *Troop Beverly Hills*

Ready for the Gen X revival? The L.A. group Rilo Kiley make twenty-something disillusionment sound wryer, sunnier and more melodic than anyone has since Alanis Morissette ruined it with her angsty whine. Their second album starts with gloomy space-rock, but can't keep its ebullience in check. Sentimental post-country tunes knock against acute lyrics about rent, overbearing parents and other aspects of the pre-midlife crisis, as rock-out moments keep griminess at bay. If Natalie Merchant worked bad jobs in nowhere towns, she might be as much fun as singer Jenny Lewis, who proclaims planetary annihilation like it's the special of the day.

STUART MUIRHEAD



Yes, Chris Robinson is married to Kate Hudson.

LEANN RIMES

TWISTED ANGEL ★★

CURB

Former Nashville prodigy grows up, hires Bon Jovi's producer

At 13, she was a Southern torch singer who shifted 8 million copies of *Blue*, a debut rooted in Patsy Cline country archaism. Now, LeAnn Rimes sings slick L.A. pop with the hunger and grit of a country torch singer. A rotating trio of producer-writer pros — Peter Amato, Desmond Child, Gregg Pagani — steer Rimes through dance-flecked workouts ("The Trouble With Goodbye," "Tic Toc"), sometimes up-shifting into anthems reminiscent of the candy arias of Italian pop ("Life Goes On," "Suddenly"). Rimes's gigantic soprano never flags, yet remains best in ballads. On "The Safest

Place," she invests the circular melody with torn-up emotion, and on the South American-spiced "Review My Kisses," a gorgeously literate, first-rate composition, she shows how Patsy Cline would have sounded if she'd been born in Brazil.

JAMES HUNTER

CHRIS ROBINSON

NEW EARTH MUD ★★

REDLINE

First result of the Black Crowes' possibly permanent "hiatus"

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thousand-gazillion guitar solos between each verse? Of course you haven't. Fret-board mayhem is pretty much the Crowes' retro raison d'être. But *New Earth Mud*, the first solo album from head Crowe Chris Robinson, places his vocals front and center, while the guitars on this mostly acoustic album are relegated to a backstage reception area. From the opening anthemic funk-ballad, "Safe in the Arms of Love," through the touching "Katie Dear" (his tribute to wife Kate Hudson), Robinson establishes himself as a distinctive singer, his world-weary yet optimistic drawl no longer beholden to the rock larynxes of yore. Maybe more albums should be written, as this one apparently was, at Goldie Hawn's pad.

CLARK COLLIS

KELLY ROWLAND

SIMPLY DEEP ★★

COLUMBIA

Always a bridesmaid, Rowland slips into gauzy tunes handpicked for an R&B runner-up

In Destiny's Child, Kelly Rowland serves as loyal, harmonizing sidekick to Beyoncé Knowles, whose starmaking manager dad keeps the spotlight on his daughter. Mathew Knowles also oversaw *Simply Deep*, and it seems like he's reserving the best songs for Beyoncé's independent breakout, scheduled for next year. Chained on a short leash, Rowland throws herself into these sloppy-seconds slow jams, splashing them with her shy, ethereal voice. A joint custody decision that landed the delicious Nelly-fied smash "Dilemma" on both singers' records boosts such formula R&B as "Stole," a gentle scold about not shooting up your school, and "Heaven," a shimmering throwback to shoulder-padded

'80s balladry. But it's clear Rowland's destiny is to remain a second banana.

LAURA SINAGRA

RÖYKSOPP

MELODY A.M. ★★★★★

WALL OF SOUND/ASTRALWERKS

Look out, France! Two guys with unpronounceable names make Norway the center of Eurobeats

How sad can you get and still be happy? In Norway, apparently, pretty damn sad. On their debut album, childhood chums Torbjørn Brundtland and Svein Berge (good luck trying to pronounce *those* names, Gideon Yago) channel post-adolescent despair into 10 groove-centric tracks that will gladden anyone who misses *Play-
era* Moby ("A Higher Place") or likes the idea of Euro-electroids Daft Punk backing up a yodeler ("Poor Leno"). Only "In Space" and the album-closing "40 Years Back/Come" (Røyksopp's attempt to imitate Air — and that's what it'll leave you gasping for) go nowhere. In addition to three videos, the bonus second disc offers a handful of dance floor-friendly remixes, which are more likely than the originals to swivel your tailbone. But they couldn't possibly make you any happier.

JEFF SALAMON

SAINT ETIENNE

FINISTERRE ★★★★★

MANTRA/BEGGARS GROUP

Oh, behave! English groovers return to form on sixth album

Like rooting for Manchester United, saying *bollocks* or drinking weak tea with milk, London pop craftsmen Saint Etienne are an institution in England but an eccentric affectation here. It's a shame, →



Saint Etienne: got to get a bigger photo booth

kim richey
rise

"Rise should catapult Richey atop the heap of literate singer-songwriters..."
- Time Out New York

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because their obsessions with '60s movies, '70s punk ideas, '80s house and '90s euphoria always make their records worth digging. After going tastefully austere on 2000's *Sound of Water*, they return to feel-good urban pop on *Finisterre* — named, contrapuntally, after a barren cape on the coast of Spain. Literate and heartfelt, the album's also a sonic riot, with gutsy electro, dream-pop and feminist rap jostling for attention beneath Sarah Cracknell's creamy vocals. If Austin Powers went beatnik, this album would be his soundtrack.

STUART MUIRHEAD

SEPULTURA

UNDER A PALE GREY SKY

★★★★

ROADRUNNER

Brazilian longhairs call it quits with one last death-metal roar

A death-metal concert isn't usually full of good vibes and hugging. But this December 16, 1996, Sepultura gig at London's Brixton Academy was especially loaded with ill will — it was the last time Max Cavalera sang with the blue-chip metal institution. Although a car accident four months earlier had killed the son of his wife, who managed Sepultura, his bandmates insisted she



Sepultura: You should see their roadies!

be fired. Cavalera's hoarse growl runs roughshod over the band's down-tuned roar, often accented by cascades of traditional Brazilian "slave music" percussion (Sepultura's metal innovation), while English punters go berserk. On his way out the door, Cavalera still funnels his resentments into a vicious performance.

ROB KEMP

RON SEXSMITH

COBBLESTONE RUNWAY ★★

NETTWERK AMERICA

Brilliant songwriter who makes sadness fun

Something great can happen when sensitive Canadians make a racket. As sweet as Neil Young's *Harvest* is, *Zuma* — where Sturm und Drang meets heartbreak — is his true tearjerker. The

same goes for Ron Sexsmith, whose first four albums were dazzling pop displays, with the melancholy of his almost casually wise wordplay banging up against the shimmer of guitars, choruses and soaring melodies. After last year's rocking *Blue Boy*, produced by Steve Earle, Sexsmith goes in the other direction. Producer Martin Terefe takes away most of the lush jangle, as well as the reverb and delay from Sexsmith's voice, until such questing love songs as "God Loves Everyone" sound self-conscious and flat, like Rufus Wainwright without the drama. Sensitivity in excess.

MICHAEL HALL

SIXPENCE NONE THE RICHER

DIVINE DISCONTENT ★★

SQUINT/REPRISE

They took their name from a religious essay by C.S. Lewis — wussies!

Given a good love lyric and enough jangly guitars, this former contemporary-Christian combo can sell

the heck out of a song, as they demonstrated with the 1999 soft-rock chart-topper "Kiss Me" and their cover of the La's "There She Goes" "Breathe Your Name," which opens the Nashville quartet's second major-label album.

re-creates that formula, with an uplifting chorus and an arrangement that swaddles Leigh Nash's chirpy vocal in lush guitar and vibraphone. But when the Sixers stray from pop froth — turning serious for the antiwar "Paralyzed" or philosophical with "Tension Is a

Passing Note" — the music is flat and contrived. Sometimes it's better to stay shallow.

J.D. CONSIDINE

THE SOFT BOYS

NEXTDOORLAND ★★

MATADOR

Robyn Hitchcock's band releases its first album since 1980's psychedelic-punk classic *Underwater Moonlight*

The Soft Boys were never supposed to be big. They were British psychedelic rockers stranded by new wave, releasing singles with titles like "(I Want to Be An)

Pretentious? Moi?

Spook-rock from Iceland, so arty it doesn't have a name

SIGUR RÓS

() ★★

FATCAT/MCA

A WIDESPREAD Internet rumor reports that George W. Bush is a Sigur Rós fan. Vocalist Jónsi Birgisson says he hopes "it is bullshit," and it seems unlikely Bush would endorse music so foreign.

Dubya may not chill to Sigur Rós's gently drifting soundscapes, but celebrities from Moby to Gillian Anderson do. And last year, their second album, *Ágætis Byrjun*, won the Shortlist Prize in England, beating out Ryan Adams and PJ Harvey.

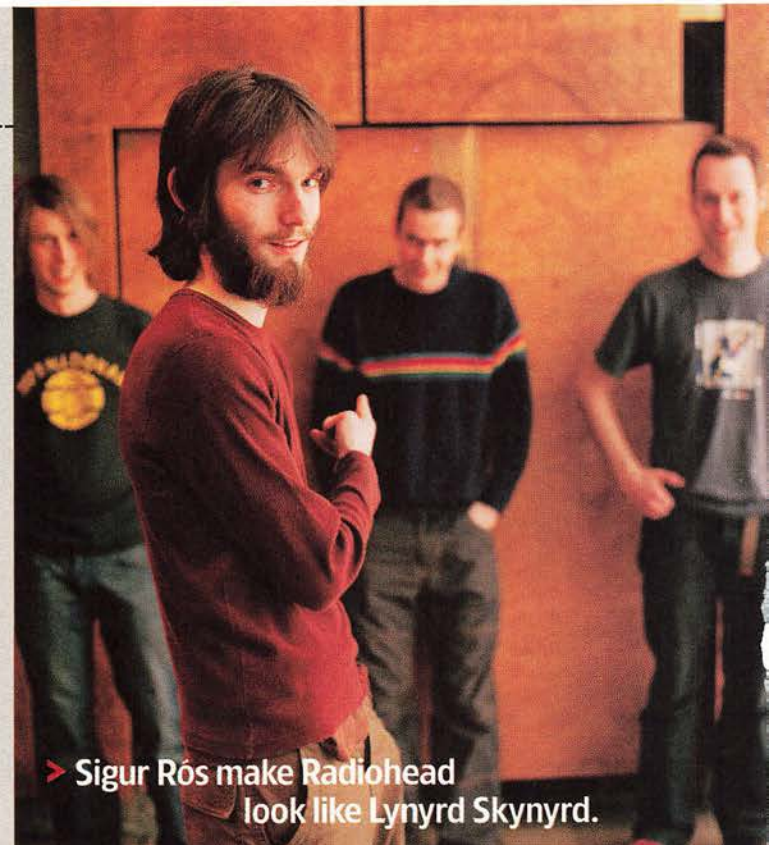
In an era of prosaic rock, Sigur Rós are implausibly pretentious. Even Radiohead look like Lynyrd Skynyrd by comparison. The songs on () — that's the title, two parentheses — have no names. Birgisson sings them in his own imaginary language, Hopelandish. Fans are invited to post their interpretations on the band's Web site. A computer program will detect the most frequent phrases, which will "become" the lyrics. You don't get this over at puddleof-mudd.com.

Indebted to ambient electronica, reclusive art-rockers My Bloody Valentine and 4AD, the label that perfected anti-rock pretension, () is more approachable than the arty nonsense surrounding it suggests.

The songs glide along, mournful, subtle and awash in stately melodies. The lack of discernible lyrics and the uniform pace — Sigur Rós have two speeds: extremely slow and Soviet state funeral procession — causes the tracks to blur dreamily, but the fourth cut is a lovely example of their signature style: waves of echoing guitar, feedback, gentle strings and piano behind Birgisson's choirboy voice. The whiff of indulgence occasionally becomes unmistakable — bombastic track seven sounds like part of a lost early-'70s rock opera — but more often, () is charming and enrapturing, adrift in its own unique, invented world. ALEXIS PETRIDIS

LIKE THIS? TRY THESE!

- ▶ RADIOHEAD
KID A CAPITOL
- ▶ MOGWAI
YOUNG TEAM MATADOR



➤ Sigur Rós make Radiohead look like Lynyrd Skynyrd.

Anglepoise Lamp." Fans of front-man Robyn Hitchcock know that two decades haven't lessened his fixation on the bizarre, and *Nextdoorland* finds him ruminating on the Antichrist, fish, babies and pigs in underpasses (and that's in just one song, "Unprotected Love"). But the Soft Boys' genius is to marry Hitchcock's surreal musings with jangly guitar on "Mr. Kennedy" and the beautiful "My Mind Is Connected to Your Dreams."

Nextdoorland sounds like the work of musicians who've spent just half an hour apart, not 20-odd years.

CLARK COLLIS

SONIC YOUTH, I.C.P. AND THE EX

IN THE FISHTANK ♦♦

KONKURRENT

New York indie elders day-trip to Holland, dabble in free jazz

For two decades, Sonic Youth have given noise-rock a good name, melding caustic guitar skronk into a career's worth of first-rate tunes. So excuse them for indulging their high-art jones on *In the Fishtank*, a side project recorded in Holland with a handful of Dutch free-jazzers. Titled with out-of-sequence Roman numerals — a sure way to foil file-sharing — the eight tracks are built around random blurts of guitar and assorted horns, with melody and groove kept at an absolute minimum. With this kind of off-the-grid improv, the best you could hope for is a cathartic, super-noisy rave-up, and the climactic "X" comes pretty close. But otherwise the only payoff is a headache.

CHRISTIAN HOARD

SOULJAHZ

THE FAULT IS HISTORY ♦♦♦

WARNER BROS.

Two brothas and a sista praise Jesus. But will He get their video on MTV?

Cristal or Christ? The three siblings in Souljahz reach for the latter when they want to get a party started. Evangelical Christians, they preach an exalted, throw-ya-hands-up submission to God: "Heads to the ground/Every knee will bow down to Jesus/Don't play around," Rachael Washington commands like an MC priestess. Lushly produced, their debut leaps between rousing gospel choirs, hip-hop rhymes, a string section, sultry R&B and Santana-esque rock — and that's only the first two

songs. Earnest lyrics reflect the trio's moral conviction, but the wisdom Souljahz drop is straight out of a 7th Heaven script: "Beneath the Surface" shakes its finger at alcoholism, while "Poor Man" patronizes the underprivileged. Souljahz mix devotion to the Lord with boisterous pop; the only real sin is the ponderous literalism of their "messages."

JONAH WEINER

ROD STEWART

THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK ♦

J RECORDS

From Gasoline Alley to Tin Pan Alley: Rod the Mod turns into Rod the Wad

The guy who once sang "Da Ya Think I'm Sexy" while wearing tiny satin shorts now wants to be a Frank Sinatra for the VH1 set. It's a halfhearted comeback for Rod Stewart, 57, trading his sandpapery rock howl for a white tuxedo lounge jacket. Though *The Great American Songbook* is bad, it's not shamefully bad — if only because it's too tasteful to risk sinking that low. Most jazz singers, for instance, see "They Can't Take That Away From Me" as a chance for mischief, hitting a sour note on the line "the way you sing off-key." But Stewart is too busy honoring the legend of Tin Pan Alley to notice that he's singing a funny song; he never cracks a smile, much less the scale. And that's what really hurts.

JEFF SALAMON

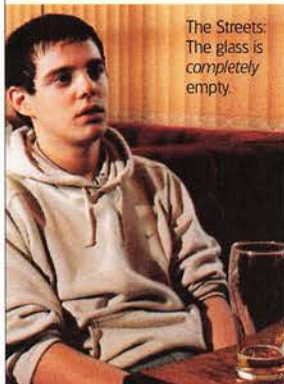
THE STREETS

ORIGINAL PIRATE MATERIAL ♦♦♦♦

VICE/ATLANTIC

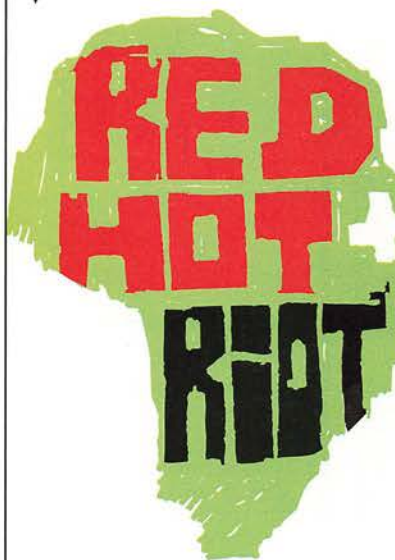
Crikey — an English MC who's actually good! Next month: Brits master toothbrushing

England is a reliable source of innovative beats and bass →



The Streets: The glass is completely empty.

THE MUSIC AND SPIRIT OF FELA KUTI



ALL NEW TRACKS FEATURING:

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D'ANGELO
SADE
MACY GRAY
KELIS
MESHELL NDEGECELLO
DEAD PREZ
TALIB KWELI
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FOO FIGHTERS ONE BY ONE



featuring
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THE GUIDE NEW RELEASES

lines, as well as good shoes, but even tiny Staten Island, New York, has yielded more top-flight MCs. On his debut album, 21-year-old Mike Skinner, who records a bling-free version of U.K. garage under the name the Streets, proves himself the most distinctive producer-rapper Britain has coughed up since Tricky. He's not exactly a virtuoso on the mic, but he's got loads of personality, a vivid social conscience and unending wit ("We first met through a shared view," claims one of his lunkhead characters. "She loved me and I did too"), in addition to a thick South London accent. In typical hip-hop fashion, Skinner spends the first four songs telling you how great he is. And the next 10 proving it.

JEFF SALAMON

SUICIDE

AMERICAN SUPREME ★★★

BLAST FIRST/MUTE

New York duo, electronic fear-punk pioneers, issue this decade's new status report

Suicide are sticking with the formula that served them well for 30 years and five albums: Alan Vega, deep in an echo chamber, mutters and groans atonally about the terrifying, irreparable decay of everything (nobody else would dare to call a song "Dachau Disney Disco"), and Martin Rev slaps a nasty, pulsing mess out of his old synths. Ever since Vega started writing entirely impressionistic lyrics in the late '70s, only the keyboards have changed; this time, Rev samples questionable guitar-funk ("Televised Executions") and discovers acid-house about 12 years late ("American Mean"). But the raw, first-take sound of most of these songs is impressive — Suicide remain the most genuinely punk of electronic bands.

DOUGLAS WOLK

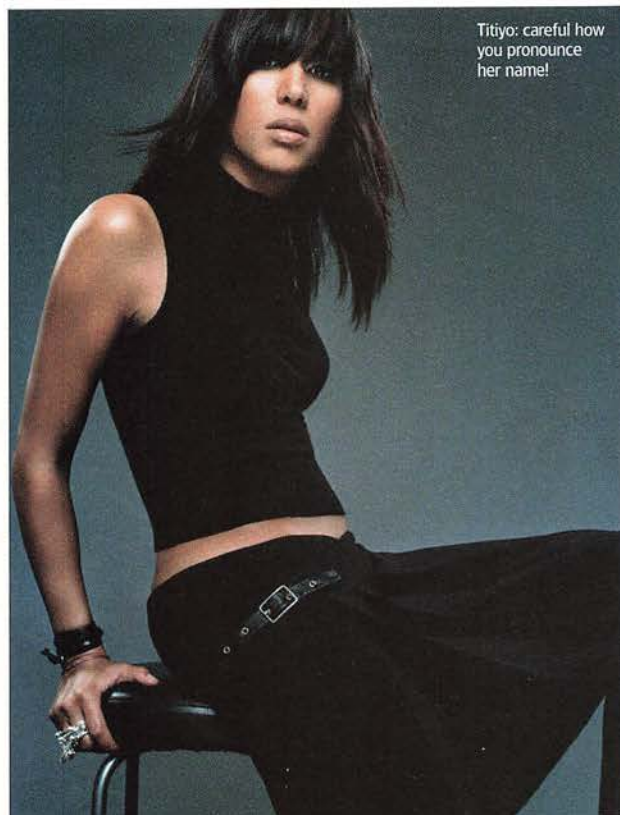
TITIYO

COME ALONG ★

LAVA/ATLANTIC

She may be Neneh Cherry's sister, but her "buffalo stance" is for the birds

Titiyo's music is just what you'd expect from an artist sponsored by a fashion designer (Marcel Marongiu): runway-friendly trip-hop lite. After three hit R&B albums in her native Sweden, she changed her tunes and got Cardigans maestro Peter Svensson to supply music and cowrite lyrics with Joakim Berg of indie-poppers Kent. After the vaguely catchy title track and the wistful "1989," it's straight downhill.



Titiyo: careful how you pronounce her name!

Titiyo's ersatz urban contemporary vocal stylings clash with Svensson's cutesy synths, sinuous beats and innocuous guitar licks; the lyrics are so vapid they seem condescending, especially in the mush-headed ballads. Blame Svensson for making such empty, calculating music — and Titiyo for taking it seriously.

MICHAEL AZERRAD

AMON TOBIN

OUT FROM OUT WHERE

★★★★

NINJA TUNE

A Brazilian Dr. Frankenstein: Splicing samples, this inventive beatsmith makes electronica come alive!!!

An electronica artist who rejects his genre's basic technology, Amon Tobin makes hyperactively detailed dance music without drum machines or synthesizers. Adamant about building his music solely from samples, he's a DJ contradiction: a sort of techno Luddite. Still, *Out From Out Where* takes the Brazilian away from the samba and jazz loops of past work and toward more modern sources. "Back From Space" swells with an ethereal sci-fi vibe, while fragmented disco bursts in and out of

"Cosmo Retro Intro Outro." Taking sound collage to seamless, organic perfection, Tobin arranges his samples like he's conducting a living orchestra. A very fast orchestra, that is, as manic percussion — clicking, banging, scatting — hurtles through the record at an amphetamine pace.

JONAH WEINER

TOM TOM CLUB

LIVE AT THE CLUBHOUSE ★★

IMUSIC

Ninety minutes, one great song: first live album by cheerful surviving original punks

They were a smart bunch, New York's punk class of 1977, but from the Ramones to Blondie, none devised a second trick to survive even into the mid-'80s. The closest exception is Tom Tom Club, formed by bassist Tina Weymouth and drummer Chris Frantz, who anchored Talking Heads with the slipperiest beats ever found in art-funk. This live double CD proves they're a supreme jam band with a keen Caribbean accent, but after "Genius of Love" — their dazzling 1981 single, still appearing on hip-hop samples 20 years later — the cutesy celebrations



Amon Tobin is living in a bubble.

of dancing, vintage R&B and carefree island life grow tiring. Weymouth's slight, girly singing is the antithesis of funk. And Frantz's shout-outs ("Yes yes, y'all!" and "Check it out, yo!") sound like someone's sozzled granddad getting irie at a barbecue.

ROB TANNENBAUM

TONIC

HEAD ON STRAIGHT ★

UNIVERSAL

Can you name even one member of this million-selling ballad band?

It's perversely fitting that the record industry is pushing for copy protection when many of its big moneymakers do little more than copy one another. On Tonic's third album, the Los Angeles trio take back from the big, dumb bands who have stolen from them since 1997's massive "If You Could Only See." Produced in Maui, Hawaii, by megamainstreamer Bob Rock (Bon Jovi, Cher), *Head On Straight* adds new lawyers of volume to blustering power ballads of great zealousness and no imagination, subtlety or trickery. "Take Me as I Am" approximates longing and heart-break with broad, generalizing strokes that devalue music more than all the baby Napsters and CD burners combined.

BARRY WALTERS

JENNY TOOMEY

TEMPTING ★★★

MISRA

Post-punk singer, activist and label head dons a ball gown, goes loungey

Nothing in Jenny Toomey's impressive indie-rock résumé — she's the singer of Tsunami, head of the Simple Machines label and a musical activist — would've hinted at this album, on which she interprets the songs of Franklin Bruno. Like Toomey, Bruno (from the band Nothing Painted Blue) is an indie icon, and his lyrics tend toward the precious and witty, with plenty of clever melodies and arrangements — he has obviously studied Burt Bacharach and Hal David. From the rumba "Your Inarticulate Boyfriend," with castanets and mariachi horns (the core of the band is Tucson, Arizona's Calexico) to the Chet Baker-ish trumpet solo on "Pointless Triangle," the record is ersatz with feeling, a prime specimen of non-vulgar camp. Toomey's singing is influenced by Baker as well; it's in her flatlined diction that turns *tempting* into *tumtutting*. Like



Tonic: They're miserable now, but wait till they read the review.

Baker, she has a knowing, slightly narcotized presence within the tracks: She's an unflappable romantic icon of indie sangfroid.

BEN RATLIFF

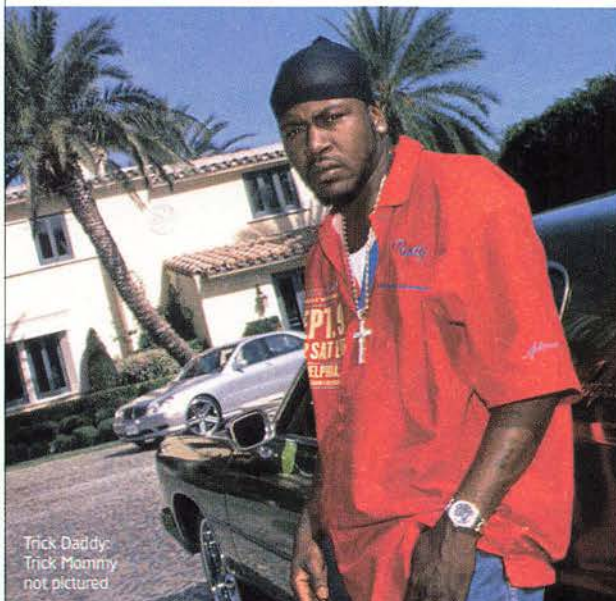
TRICK DADDY

THUG HOLIDAY ★★★

SLIP-N-SLIDE/ATLANTIC

Miami thug is as nasty as he wants to be — but then he feels bad. Aw!

"You gots to understand, Trick love the kids," Miami rapper Trick Daddy jokes, twisting a breakfast-cereal motto over the breezy Southern funk of "In da Wind." Not exactly a typical thug boast, but with his cartoonish name, endearing snarl and funny, occasionally self-deprecating lyrics, Trick is anything but typical. He continues to humanize his thug pose on his fifth album, ruling our world gone mad on the affectionately over-the-top title track and offering repentance on "Ain't No Santa" and "Rain It Pours." The self-explanatory



Trick Daddy: Trick Mommy not pictured

"Money & Drugs" and "Gangsta" establish what he has to feel apologetic about. Hard, humorous and surprisingly humble, Trick is that rare thug: one with a conscience.

HUA HSU

TRAVIS TRITT

STRONG ENOUGH ★★

COLUMBIA

Country badass and Skynyrd fan turns soft as hay

When he emerged in 1990, steeped in Southern rock and outlaw country, Travis Tritt seemed like Nashville's next best thing; with such hits as "Help Me Hold On," he virtually invented the country "power ballad," soon done to death by lesser hands. Now Tritt's become a lesser hand. Though he wants to keep one foot in the honky-tonks ("You Can't Count Me Out Yet"), his pose is unconvincing — especially when "Complicated Lady" (worst song title of the month!) and "I Don't Ever Want Her to Feel That Way Again" prove as drippy as most Nashville fare. Though it's always nice to hear a country star who knows how to sing with bluesy rhythm, Tritt needs to regain some attitude.

JOHN MORTHLAND

VARIOUS ARTISTS

LIVE FROM BONNAROO

★★★

SANCTUARY

Brand names highlight an aural postcard of summer's biggest gig. Mud not included

If you attended Bonnaroo back in June, you saw a nearly →

"...the next contenders for the new metal crown." - *Rolling Stone*

"One of the most anticipated records for 2002" - *Alternative Press*



WELCOME

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TAPROOT

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Romanesque orgy of groove-oriented music, the apparent start of an annual festival. If you didn't, these two discs, containing 21 tracks chosen from 55 performances, simulates part of the experience — but only part. Fest centerpiece Widespread Panic kick it off with a gospel-stoked "Tallboy." Steel-guitar wiz Robert Randolph and Phish's Trey Anastasio also contribute explosive tracks before the album heads home with the Blind Boys of Alabama's fairly bizarre conflation of the sacred "Amazing Grace" with "House of the Rising Sun," a song about a brothel. Inexplicably missing, though, are the three young groups — Disco Biscuits, Umphrey's McGee and Particle — that specialize in expansive, fresh and daring new jam mutations. Maybe next year.

RICHARD GEHR

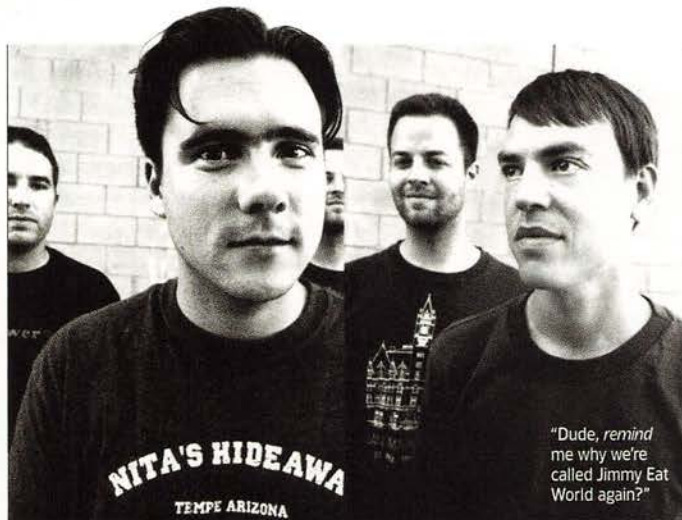
VARIOUS ARTISTS

Dragging the Lake ★★★

SIDE ONE DUMMY

Compilation featuring new tracks from Blink-182, Jimmy Eat World and 22 other acts that sound a lot like them

An ideal gift for the Martian in your life who's curious about the whole emo-punk-power-pop axis, this compilation brings together previously unreleased songs by Alkaline Trio ("Jaked on Green



Beers") and Simple Plan ("I'd Do Anything," assisted by Blink-182's Mark Hoppus). Ringleaders Blink-182, the model for these pop-punk knockoffs, offer the frenetic and explicitly morose "Time to Break Up" ("I used to hate the lipstick/It stained and tasted so sick/The pantyhose and the bras/She threw on my guitars"). Even among the less-well-known acts (Slick Shoes, Kut U Up, Name Taken), the quality of the material is surprisingly high. But the bigger names make *Lake* a worthwhile purchase, particularly Jimmy Eat World's

bludgeoning live version of concert highlight "Praise Chorus."

CLARK COLLIS

VARIOUS ARTISTS

LAS PALMAS COLLECTIVES

★★★★

VUJA DE/IRUN

A true "Latin dance music" — created, of course, by a Brit

The dance music called "Latin house" is often as Hispanic as Rice-a-Roni, with

broad flamenco beats strategically grafted onto dull disco clichés. But Martin East — a U.K. transplant living in Los Angeles — creates a genuine hybrid on this collection, with 11 linked and alertly laid-back mixes. The mood is sunny lushness: songs and instrumental licks by every Latin-influenced West Coast pop act from Herb Albert and Steely Dan to Gato Barbieri and Burt Bacharach, expanded and framed by house rhythms full of friction, surprise, dimension and smoke. Here, though, East stretches brief, unforgettable bits until they seem to last like an L.A. sunset.

JAMES HUNTER

VARIOUS ARTISTS

RED HOT + RIOT: A TRIBUTE TO FELA KUTI ★★★

MCA

Hip-hop and soul all-stars pay tribute to a Nigerian legend

Most tribute CDs are long on good intentions and short on good tracks. But not *Red Hot + Riot*, a star-studded homage to Afrobeat pioneer Fela Kuti, a collection to raise money to fight AIDS (the cause of Kuti's 1997 death) in Africa. The mishmash of mostly soul and hip-hop artists — including D'Angelo, Macy Gray and Talib Kweli —

No Mercy

Dylan Jr. takes revenge on his ex

THE WALLFLOWERS

RED LETTER DAYS ★★★

INTERSCOPE

THE FIRST TIME Jakob Dylan sings "I wish you health, I wish you happiness, but absolutely nothing else," he's the soul of anger, spitting venom with every syllable. You sense he wrote the song on the downside of a messy split — vindictiveness steers his voice.

But as "Health and Happiness" unfolds, what began as a curse morphs into a kind of prayer. He's obviously still in love, because he's wishing the only blessings that really matter for a woman who was once the only one who mattered to him.

Alternating currents of emotion run through the solid, sometimes brilliant *Red Letter Days*. While Dylan has written about being busted apart by love before (notably on his 4 million-selling breakthrough, 1996's *Bringing Down the Horse*), he's never devoted an entire record to it. And he's never been so blunt, or so acidic, in his accounts.

He spends much of his band's fourth album describing the tension of

the busted relationship. On "See You When I Get There" — three minutes of chugging vintage-rock bliss with a sneer on top — he resentfully shouts "I need your love much more than I want it; you left me here with another bad habit." The medium-tempo "Too Late to Quit" finds him belting in an almost savage voice he's never used before.

As the Wallflowers operate at their two accustomed speeds — quiet brooding, or thrumming arena backbeats midway between Tom Petty and U2 — Dylan carries on stoically through his reverie. He sorts calmly through the wreckage, looking back over circumstances he can barely understand. In the contrast between his doleful tone and the exuberant music surrounding it is a novel's worth of heartbreak that's just waiting to explode. TOM MOON

JAKOB DYLAN'S CURRENT LISTENING

- ▶ SPEARHEAD
STAY HUMAN SIX DEGREES
- ▶ MCS
BACK IN THE USA RHINO



> Dylan's never been so blunt, or so acidic.

works largely because of Kuti's songs, which used jazz, funk and African rhythms as a launching pad for ecstatic improvisation. Sade's percussion-laden version of "By Your Side" (one of the few non-Kuti compositions here) stands out among a half-dozen down-tempo numbers, but "Kalakuta Show," featuring Mix Master Mike of the Beastie Boys and members of Blackalicious, captures the disc's predominant vibe: funky, celebratory, eminently danceable. Just like a Fela Kuti show.

CHRISTIAN HOARD

VARIOUS ARTISTS

RISE ABOVE ★★

SANCTUARY

Henry Rollins, Ryan Adams and Iggy Pop stick up for accused child-killers

Thanks to the 1996 HBO documentary *Paradise Lost*, the West Memphis Three — a trio of Arkansas metalheads convicted for the horrific murders of three toddlers — have become a cause célèbre for left-wing rockers. Henry Rollins assembled alt-rock luminaries to tackle the songbook of his former band, hardcore punk standard-bearers Black Flag (who often sang about injustice at the hands of authority), as a benefit for the jailed Three. Rollins's backing band, Mother Superior, imitates the original Flag uncannily; ex-Faith No More vocalist Mike Patton attacks "Six Pack" like a rabid cur; Ice-T revisits his well-known disaffection for the gendarmes in "Police Story." Rollins bellows on seven of the 24 covers of his old band, and his reprises of "TV Party" and "Slip It In" have more *joie de vivre* than anything he's done since he left Black Flag.

ROB KEMP

CAETANO VELOSO

LIVE IN BAHIA ★★

NONESUCH

Brazil's most fascinating performer makes a musical homecoming you can all join in with

A ceaselessly inventive and charismatic presence for nearly four decades, Caetano Veloso combines Bob Dylan's brains and Frank Sinatra's suavity with Cirque du Soleil showmanship. Veloso often reprises his ambitious studio albums with lower-budget live documents: *Live in Bahia* follows *Noites do Norte*, his relatively languid meditation on slavery and liberation. *Bahia* is a homecoming, since it was recorded in northeastern Brazil, where Veloso was raised, and unfortunately, his rowdy audience sings and claps along annoyingly with better-known songs such as "Tropicália" and "Como Uma Onda (Zen Surfismo)." Veloso illuminates the rich tapestry of Brazilian popular music — from bossa nova to rock to avant-garde

— through his original material and carefully curated native cover versions.

RICHARD GEHR

WACO BROTHERS

NEW DEAL ★★

BLOODSHOT

Not from Waco (not brothers, either), this boozy posse champions "alcohol, freedom and a country song"

Although they never met, and would have found much to disagree about, the Clash and Hank Williams share many disciples. Chicago country-punks the Waco Brothers are the noisiest members of that club — they're radical leftist shouters by upbringing, honky-tonk entertainers by inclination. Led by an exiled Brit, the Mekons' Jon Langford, the band's sixth album finds it on bristling form in a melodious riot of steel guitars and thumping beats. Melancholy forms the Wacos' core — tales of cracked relationships and thwarted lives predominate — but humor and backwoods swing always prevail in the end over heartbreak and political disillusionment. A lot of beer seems to help, too.

PAUL DU NOYER

WIDESPREAD PANIC

LIVE IN THE CLASSIC CITY ★★

SANCTUARY/WIDESPREAD

Third live album from the jam band and their many, many, many friends

In which the six-piece Panic prove once again that they may be history's most misleadingly named act, with a set of jams so unhurried, laid-back and often soporifically similar, it almost qualifies as a near-death experience. Not that this document of three April 2000 shows in Athens, Georgia, is short of attractions for the fan already tired of last October's *Live at Oak Mountain* DVD. The band offers predictably solo-heavy retoolings of JJ Cale's "Ride Me High" and Funkadelic's "Red Hot Mama," while live favorites "Chilly Water" and "Bear's Gone Fishin'" are also present. On hand as well are a host of special guests, including Rolling Stones keyboardist Chuck



Caetano Veloso: Portuguese for rockin'!

Leavell and former R.E.M. drummer Bill Berry — although, irritatingly, there's no indication of which tracks they special-guest on.

CLARK COLLIS

GEORGE WINSTON

NIGHT DIVIDES THE DAY: THE MUSIC OF THE DOORS ★

WINDHAM HILL

The world's most boring pianist plays the longest version of "Light My Fire" you'll ever hear

Here's what's become of the great rock & roll legacy of the '60s: George Winston, the new-age pianist and human sleeping pill, has recorded an album of 13 songs by the Doors, those sex-and-nudity loving rock radicals. Doors keyboardist Ray Manzarek has spent the last 30 years shamelessly pimping and diminishing the band's legacy, so tinkling versions of these FM classics lose their ability to shock. Winston's interpretations can instantly make you feel like you're reading Deepak Chopra in a New Mexico latte shop: He fills "The Crystal Ship" with dramatic pauses, and his gassy version of "Light My Fire" nearly cracks the 10-minute mark. With his self-serious, glassy piano tone, Winston acts as though he's playing a Chopin recital at Carnegie Hall.

ROB TANNENBAUM

WONDERMINTS

MIND IF WE MAKE LOVE TO YOU ★★

SMILE/IMAGE

Latter-day Brian Wilson disciples offer an album of good vibrations

L.A.'s power-popping Wondermints have spent several years California dreamin' as members of Brian Wilson's backing band, and fittingly, their fourth album finds plenty of their hero's sound washing up on their beach. *Mind if We Make Love to You's* "Ride" and "Listen" proudly display the Beach Boys' lineage — although their sun-drenched melodies and R&B-shaded rhythms recall not the work of Brian but of younger brother Carl Wilson on the early-'70s albums *Sunflower* and *Surf's Up*. And Wondermints keyboardist Darian Sahanaja's luscious, classically tinged "Another Way" looks back even further — it could almost pass as an outtake from an earlier Beach Boys-inspired masterpiece, the Zombies' 1968 gem, *Odessey & Oracle*.

BILLY ALTMAN

Blender Approved

The pick of recent new releases



BECK

SEA CHANGE

GEFFEN

The King of Fake turns real, with a based-on-a-true-story breakup album: The aching music is detailed, lush and as slow as heartache itself.



TRINA

DIAMOND PRINCESS

SLIP-N-SLIDE/ATLANTIC

Featuring "No Panties," this hip-hop dirty girl's second album, juiced by Missy Elliott's beats, is hard to get out of your head. The stains on your sheets could use some bleach, though.



MESHUGGAH

NOTHING

NUCLEAR BLAST

Beloved by System of a Down and Tool, these four Swedes with names we won't even attempt to spell set a new standard for blazing metal punch.



CEDELL DAVIS

WHEN LIGHTNIN' STRUCK THE PINE

FAST HORSE/RYKODISC

With help from Peter Buck, this Arkansas blues fossil, 76, unleashes feel-so-bad howls and slicing slide guitar — played with a butter knife!

THE 40

MOST POPULAR SONGS IN AMERICA

→ Santana and Michelle Branch trounce Christina Aguilera and Redman — but not, sadly, in a wrestling match

Carlos Santana: "Ow! These strings are sharp!"



2 SANTANA "THE GAME OF LOVE" SHAMAN

For this single, Santana teams up with Michelle Branch, hoping to duplicate the guest star–powered success of 1999's *Supernatural*. His new album, *Shaman*, also features P.O.D., opera star Plácido Domingo and three Rob Thomas songs. Bigwig Clive Davis executive-produces again, despite having left Santana's label to run his own, J Records.



Faith Hill at number 10? It's a pain in the neck.

HOW WE DID IT >>>>

The Most Popular Songs chart is based on radio and video airplay, and album sales. Provided by HITSDailyDouble.com: "Proof that any idiot in the music business can have a Web site."



POSITION	TITLE	ARTIST	ALBUM/LABEL
1	"SK8ER BOI"	AVRIL LAVIGNE	LET GO ARISTA
2	"THE GAME OF LOVE"	SANTANA FEAT. MICHELLE BRANCH	SHAMAN ARISTA
3	"DILEMMA"	NELLY	NELLYVILLE FOR REEL/UNIVERSAL
4	"DIRTTY"	CHRISTINA AGUILERA FEAT. REDMAN	STRIPPED RCA
5	"ALL MY LIFE"	FOO FIGHTERS	ONE BY ONE RCA
6	"LOSE YOURSELF"	EMINEM	8 MILE ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK SHADY/AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE
7	"HAPPY"	ASHANTI	ASHANTI PURDER INC./DEF JAM
8	"A MOMENT LIKE THIS"	KELLY CLARKSON	A MOMENT LIKE THIS RCA
9	"PRAYER"	DISTURBED	BELIEVE REPRISE
10	"CRY"	FAITH HILL	CRY WARNER BROS.
11	"HEY MA"	CAM'RON	COME HOME WITH ME ROC-A-FELLA/DEF JAM
12	"UNDERNEATH IT ALL"	NO DOUBT	ROCK STEADY INTERSCOPE
13	"DON'T KNOW WHY"	NORAH JONES	COME AWAY WITH ME BLUE NOTE
14	"LANDSLIDE"	DIXIE CHICKS	HOME OPEN WIDE/MONUMENT/COLUMBIA
15	"WHEN THE LAST TIME"	CLIPSE	LORD WILLIN' STAR TRAK/ARISTA
16	"YOUR BODY IS A WONDERLAND"	JOHN MAYER	ROOM FOR SQUARES AWARE/COLUMBIA
17	"FAMILY PORTRAIT"	PINK	MISSUNDAZTOOD ARISTA
18	"SATELLITE"	P.O.D.	SATELLITE ATLANTIC
19	"POEM"	TAPROOT	WELCOME VELVET HAMP/ATLANTIC
20	"STOLE"	KELLY ROWLAND	SIMPLY DEEP COLUMBIA
21	"GRACE IS GONE"	DAVE MATTHEWS BAND	BUSTED STUFF RCA
22	"COMPLICATED"	AVRIL LAVIGNE	LET GO ARISTA
23	"LIKE I LOVE YOU"	JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE	JUSTIFIED JIVE
24	"DEAD LEAVES AND THE DIRTY GROUND"	THE WHITE STRIPES	WHITE BLOOD CELLS THIRD MAN/V2
25	"AERIALS"	SYSTEM OF A DOWN	TOXICITY AMERICAN/COLUMBIA
26	"LIFE GOES ON"	LEANN RIMES	TWISTED ANGEL CURB
27	"THE ZEPHYR SONG"	RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS	BY THE WAY WARNER BROS.
28	"CHING CHING"	MS. JADE	GIRL INTERRUPTED BEAT CLUB/INTERSCOPE
29	"GOODBYE TO YOU"	MICHELLE BRANCH	SPIRIT ROOM MAVERICK/WARNER BROS.
30	"I AM MINE"	PEARL JAM	RIOT ACT EPIC
31	"HEY SEXY LADY"	SHAGGY	LUCKY DAY MCA
32	"OUTTATHAWAY"	THE VINES	HIGHLY EVOLVED CAPITOL
33	"EVERYDAY"	BON JOVI	BOUNCE ISLAND
34	"SOMEDAY"	THE STROKES	IS THIS IT RCA
35	"IN A WHILE"	UNCLE KRACKER	NO STRANGER TO SHAME LAVA/ATLANTIC
36	"STARRY EYED SURPRISE"	PAUL OAKENFOLD	BUNKKA MAVERICK/REPRISE
37	"I DO"	3LW	A GIRL CAN MACK EPIC
38	"HATE TO SAY I TOLD YOU SO"	THE HIVES	VENI VIDI VICIOUS BURNING HEART/EPITAPH/SIRE
39	"LITTLE THINGS"	INDIA.ARIE	VOYAGE TO INDIA MOTOWN
40	"COME AWAY WITH ME"	NORAH JONES	COME AWAY WITH ME BLUE NOTE

4 CHRISTINA AGUILERA FEATURING REDMAN "DIRTTY" STRIPPED



Aguilera's hip-hop fixation is so pronounced, she's taken a cue from Nelly and added an extra R to the title of her single, which she co-produced with Rockwilder. With Britney Spears out of the picture, at least for the time being, Aguilera's road to post-teen pop supremacy is clear.

5 FOO FIGHTERS "ALL MY LIFE" ONE BY ONE

This, the brutal first single from the Foo Fighters' follow-up to 1999's *There Is Nothing Left to Lose*, is already rocketing up the alternative and active rock charts.



It may shore up the Foo's metal constituency, but they risk alienating fans of such earlier candy-coated hits as "Learn to Fly."

19 TAPROOT "POEM" WELCOME

With support from M2 and metal radio, Fred Durst–baiting four-piece Taproot has forsaken rap–metal for a Creed–



influenced approach that is rock radio's bread and butter. October 15 was "Taproot Day" in the band's hometown of Ann Arbor, Michigan.

39 INDIA.ARIE "LITTLE THINGS" VOYAGE TO INDIA

India Arie sold 1 million of 2001's *Acoustic Soul* in the wake of seven Grammy nominations. "Little Things" has won substantial urban radio airplay, but Norah Jones's



Come Away With Me has a grip on the Sunday-brunch demographic that'll be tough to overcome.



The real reason for **breaks** between sets.



Make your night out a memorable one - please drink in moderation.
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“I Play the Who and Run Around Naked!”

Yes, friends, life is exciting when you're **David Cross**, star comic of *Mr. Show* and owner of some amazingly weird music. But what's this — no Creed? “That guy oils his chest for his photos!”

BY CLARK COLLIS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY EMILY SHUR



Kids! Never play records without your safety headgear.

“MOST OF THE MUSIC I have is criminally underappreciated,” says comedian David Cross, inspecting the extensive CD collection that lines the hallway of his apartment in New York's East Village. The same could be said of Cross himself, who, despite having co-created and starred in the groundbreakingly surreal HBO sketch comedy series *Mr. Show*, is unlikely to earn Adam Sandler-size paychecks anytime soon.

Maybe if he spent more time playing the Hollywood game and less time seeing live gigs...

“I do see a lot of shows,” admits Cross, who grew up not too far from music-crazed Athens, Georgia. “Over a hundred a year. Obviously, if I'm on a movie set and have to get up at 7 in the morning I can't go... But I do anyway.”

Cross exhibits his determination to do (and certainly say) whatever he wants on his new

live double CD, *Shut Up You Fucking Baby!*, which finds him satirically skewering everything from the Old Testament to post-September 11 patriotism.

“About three or four weeks after it happened, I was doing a college show,” Cross says. “I asked the audience, ‘Hey, can I make fun of Bush again?’ And they went fuckin’ nuts. I was like, ‘Oh, cool.’ I think Bush is a really bad man. I think he really is. Mean, selfish and dangerous.”

Today, however, Cross reserves his harshest words for purveyors of what he describes as “any kind of pseudo-alternative music.”

“What's that band's name? Creed!” he spits. “It's just bullshit. Manufactured angst. And you're listening to that from a guy who takes his shirt off and oils his chest before every photograph! You know, he may fool tens of millions of people. But he ain't fooling me!”



THE WHO

QUADROPHENIA

MCA, 1973

“When I was 15, I was an angry, insolent, idealistic kid living in Roswell, [Georgia], hating everybody, not able to get a girlfriend or even make out with anybody, feeling like a freak. I'd go in my room, shut my door, slam everything around and put on *Quadrophonia* really, really loud. When I'm fucked up, I'll come home, crank it and run around my apartment naked, breaking shit.”



THE FLAMING LIPS

THE SOFT BULLETIN

WARNER BROS., 1998

“All their stuff is great, but this is such a beautiful album. It's so pure and organic and smart and beautiful, and no one is saying the things they're saying. I think a lot of people, unfortunately, would listen to this and like it but dismiss it as cute, a novelty, quirky. But it's so much more than that. A stunning album.”



BETTY BLUE

ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK

ALLIANCE, 1988

“I love the movie, but the theme, ‘C'est le Vent, Betty,’ is one of my favorite pieces of music. Really moving. It's a whole movie in a four-minute song — drama, comedy, pain, loss, reunification. And dude, you can't deny that Beatrice Dalle is fucking hot. And she's all French and shit.”

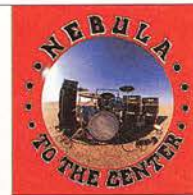


YOU AM I

#4 RECORD

RA, 1998

“They're from Australia. I've got everything they've ever recorded, I think. I hope. This is their fourth record, obviously, and it's great power-pop rock. It's very Who-ish. The drummer is clearly Keith Moon-influenced. They're really good songs. I'm telling you, if you ever get to see these guys live, that's what rock & roll is about. They're having fun. They kick ass.”



NEBULA

TO THE CENTER

SUB POP, 1999

“I like all Nebula. The last one [*Charged*, 2001] is even better — I wanted to hear it on the jukebox at 7B [an East Village bar], so I gave it to them. They're just a three-piece, but you get bathed in this music. I'll stand right in front of the speakers. It's like having a really cool dream. I always have notebooks with me and let my mind go when I see bands. It's like skydiving after the chute opens.”

“I can't go to gigs when I have to be on a movie set at 7 A.M. But I go anyway.”



When you play this LP backwards, you can hear Charles Manson say, "Attend church regularly."

AND MORE...

ADEN HEY 19 AFGHAN WHIGS
GENTLEMAN AIR MOON SAFARI
ASS PONY'S THE KNOWN
UNIVERSE TODD BARRY MEDIUM
ENERGY THE BEASTIE BOYS
PAUL'S BOUTIQUE THE BEATLES
LET IT BE BECK ODEY BIKINI
KILL THE SINGLES FRANK BLACK
TEENAGER OF THE YEAR LEWIS
BLACK THE WHITE ALBUM BLACK
SABBATH GREATEST HITS DAVID
BOWIE YOUNG AMERICANS BOW
WOW WOW SEE JUNGLE SEE
JUNGLE ALBERT BROOKS
COMEDY MINUS ONE
BUZZCOCKS SINGLES GOING
STEADY CAKE MOTORCADE OF
GENEROSITY THE CARDIGANS
LIFE JOHNNY CASH AMERICAN
RECORDINGS NICK CAVE & THE
BAD SEEDS LET LOVE IN CHEMI-
CAL BROTHERS SURRENDER
NENEH CHERRY HONEYBEE THE
CLASH THE CLASH CORNELIUS
POINT ELVIS COSTELLO KING OF
AMERICA THE CREATURE
COMFORTS THE POLITICS OF
POP DESMOND DEKLER
ISRAELITES THE DETROIT
COBRAS MINK RAT OR RABBIT
THE DICKIES GREAT DICTATIONS
DINOSAUR JR. WHERE YOU BEEN
DMX THE GREAT DEPRESSION
DOVES LOST SOULS NICK DRAKE
WAY TO BLUE DUMP SUPER-
POWERLESS EELS SOUL JACKER
ELASTICA ELASTICA THE ELEVATOR
DROPS POP BUS EMPIRE
STATE INTERNAL COMBUSTION
EVERCLEAR SPARKLE AND FADE
JASON FALKNER CAN YOU STILL
FEEL THE FALL EXTRICATE FAST-
BACKS THE DAY THAT DIDN'T
EXIST FASTBACK ZUCKER
FATIMA MANSIONS VIVA DEAD
PONIES THE FIGGS BANDA
MACHO FIREHOSE MR. MACHINE
OPERATOR THE FLAMING LIPS
CLOUDS TASTE METALLIC FLOP
WHENEVER YOU'RE READY FOO
FIGHTERS THE COLOUR AND THE
SHAPE FUGAZI THE ARGUMENT
MARVIN GAYE THE BEST OF
POP GORILLAZ GORILLAZ
LAZ THE GRAVEL PIT SILVER
GORILLA DAVID GREENBERGER
THE DUPLEX PLANET RADIO
HOUR GUIDED BY VOICES DO
THE COLLAPSE PJ HARVEY DRY
THE HIVES VENI VIDI VICIOUS
THE JAM DIRECTION REACTION
CREATION DANIEL JOHNSTON
REJECTED UNKNOWN THE LADY-
BUG TRANSFORM BEVERLY
ATONAL LAMBCHOP NIXON
LUDACRIS WORD OF MOUF
CURTIS MAYFIELD & THE
IMPRESSIONS THE ANTHOLOGY
1961-1977 MEL-BANANA
TEENY SHINY MERCURY REV ALL
IS DREAM BOB MOULD POISON
YEARS NIRVANA INCESTICIDE
SINEAD O'CONNOR SO FAR...
THE BEST OF OLD 97'S RIGHT
SONGS WILL OLDHAM
BLACK/RICH MUSIC OLIVIA
TREMOR CONTROL BLACK
FOLIAGE VOLUME 1 OPAL FOX
QUARTET THE LOVE THAT WON'T
SHUT UP BETH ORTON TRAILER
PARK OUTKAST AQUEMINI
GRAHAM PARKER STRUCK BY
LIGHTNING PAVEMENT CROOKED
RAIN CROOKED RAIN LIZ PHAIR
EXILE IN GUYVILLE PIXIES
SURFER ROSA ROBERT
POLLARD KID MARINE THE
POLYPHONIC SPREE THE BEGIN-
NING STAGES OF... POND ROCK
COLLECTION PORTASTATIC!
HOPE YOUR HEART IS NOT BRIT-
TLE PORTISHEAD DUMMIES
THE POSIES FROSTING ON THE
GREATER POUNDCAKE ALOHA VIA
SATELLITE QUASI THE SWORD OF
GOD QUEENS OF THE STONE
AGE RATED R RADIOHEAD OK
COMPUTER RAHZEY MAKE THE
MUSIC 2000 REDD KROSS
PHASESHIFTER R.E.M. MURMUR
THE REPLACEMENTS LET IT BE
HENRY ROLLINS THINK TANK
ROYAL TRUX POUND FOR
POUND SEBASTIAN BAKESALE
SIOUXSIE & THE BANSHEES
PEEPSHOW SLOAN SNEARED
SLY & THE FAMILY STONE
GREATEST HITS SPASHING
PUMPKIN FISHING BLUE
ELLIOTT SMITH EITHER/OR SMOG
RED APPLES FALLS SOLEX PICK
UP DUSTY SPRINGFIELD
ANTHOLOGY SUGAR BESIDES
THE SUGARCUBES LIFE'S TOO
GOOD SUPERCHUNK POOLISH
SUPERGRASS IN IT FOR THE
MONEY SUPERSUCKERS LA
PIETER CORNUDEA MATTHEW
SWEET GIRLFRIEND BAR-CORNER
AND OUT TENACIOUS D TENA-
CIOUS D THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS
APOLLO 18 TOOL ANIMA TREE-
PEOPLE GUILT REGRET EMBAR-
RASSMENT TRICKY
OVERGURILL SATURATION
VELOCITY GIRL SIMPATICO
VERSUS SECRET SWINGERS TOM
WAITS RAIN DOGS THE WEDDING
PRESENT WATUFI PAUL WELLER
WILD WOOD WILCO SUMMER-
TEETH X UNCLOGGED XTC
ORANGES AND LEMON NEIL
YOUNG HARVEST YOUNG FRESH
FELLOWS TOSPY TURRY



CROOKED FINGERS

BRING ON THE SNAKES

WARM, 2001

"Crooked Fingers is Eric Bachmann, who fronted Archers of Loaf — which was a great band, but this is nothing like it. He's very much in the vein of Tom Waits. If you like Tom Waits, Nebraska-era Bruce Springsteen and Leonard Cohen, you should definitely get this album. Even if you don't like that shit, get this, because it's better."



NEUTRAL MILK HOTEL

IN THE AEROPLANE OVER THE SEA

MERGE, 1998

"This is just brilliant. Jeff Mangum, who does all the music, is really expressive and poetic. He's part of that current Athens scene: Apples in Stereo, Olivia Tremor Control — [the label] Elephant 6 kind of stuff. They all rotate in and out of their bands. It's beautiful music. Is there anyone I could compare them to? No. There's a lot of... trombone."



CHEAP TRICK

CHEAP TRICK

EPIC, 1977

"They're a criminally underrated band. They didn't make one bad album. Rick Nielsen's amazing. They're all so tight. They competed with Van Halen and Journey, but this is so much better, man. This is driving, good, solid pop-rock. Lots of beautiful, tasty hooks. They don't get their due as far as how great and influential and ahead of the curve they were."



BJÖRN OLSSON

INSTRUMENTALMUSIK

OMPLATTEN, 1999

"There are a handful of record stores where I just trust the staff when they say 'Get this; it's great.' This place on [Manhattan's] 4th Street, Other Music, is one of them. This is one of their things. It's very soundtrack-oriented. I walk around with a Walkman, and there are so many occasions where you want to listen to something other than some asshole talking on a cell phone."



CAT POWER

MOON PIX

MATADOR, 1998

"Chan Marshall — she's from Atlanta. I was hosting this thing for Matador's tenth anniversary celebration. When I asked her what she wanted for an introduction, it was, pathetically, like love at first sight. She's beautiful, but her personality is beautiful as well. Then she does a cover of 'Satisfaction,' and it's one of those rare moments when you know everything's a little bit different now."

The Real Thing

In the '90s, the world's most earnest band met presidents and supermodels. But did they write many great songs?

U2

BEST OF 1990–2000

★★★★

UNIVERSAL/ISLAND

AS A SHORTHAND, Beatles fans often divide themselves into “red album” or “blue album” people, symbolizing a preference for a compilation of the band’s early years or the later era.

Now U2’s admirers can play the same game. Four years ago, the band released *The Best of 1980–1990*, representing their first decade as the self-positioned World’s Most Important Band. Now we’ve got the sequel, stretching from *Achtung Baby* to the end of the second millennium since Jesus Christ. Comparisons are inevitable — not just between U2 and the Beatles or Bono and Jesus Christ, but between the U2 of those distant mullet-and-morality years, and the smirking, irony-rich version that came after.

For better or worse, U2 came a long way in those two decades. It’s the difference between the bright, righteous daylight of “Pride (In the Name of Love)” and the winking

neon nighttime of “Mysterious Ways.” The first song was about the murder of Martin Luther King Jr.; the second made reference to cunnilingus and was performed accompanied by a belly dancer whom guitarist the Edge later wed. It’s the difference between four gawky but earnest Irish boys and a sleek, global supergroup that consults with world leaders by day and cavorts with supermodels by night.

Released in 1991, *Achtung Baby* was a turning point, and set the tone for a lot of what followed. Their famous “reinvention” as media-saturated citizens of cyberspace is commemorated here by “Even Better Than the Real Thing,” “Mysterious Ways” and “Until the End of the World.” But here also is “One,” an exquisite, melancholy hymn that shows U2’s underlying seriousness.

From *Baby*’s follow-up, *Zooropa*, come two great tracks, “Stay (Faraway, So Close!)” and “The First Time,” but also the aptly titled “Numb,” which has presumably been included as a favor to the Edge, its creator and singer.

Sensuality and doubt now replaced the spiritual certainty of

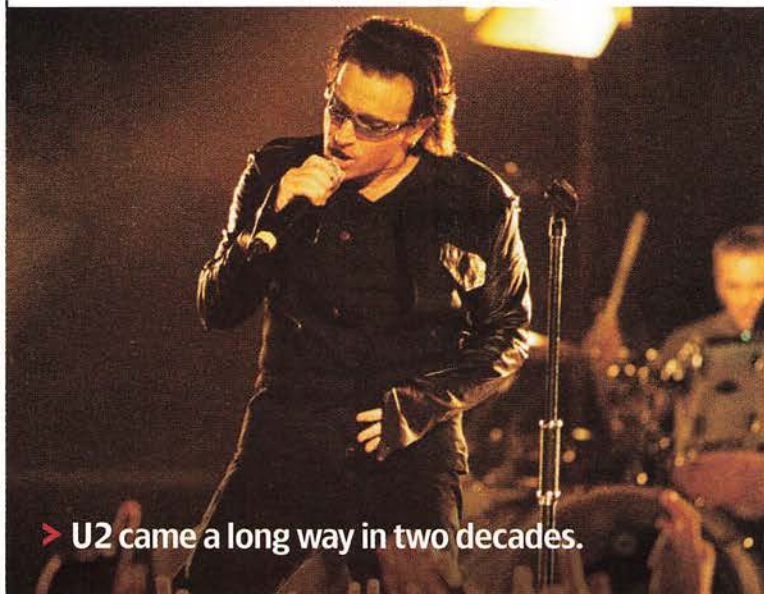
early U2. The troubled but interesting *Pop* (1997) contributes “Discothèque,” “Staring at the Sun” and “Gone,” all as remixes. It’s a shame, however, that U2 deemed it fit to truncate “Miss Sarajevo” (from 1995’s *Passengers*), dropping the gorgeous, slow crescendo that precedes the operatic entrance of Luciano Pavarotti.

The recent return to “classic” U2, *All That You Can’t Leave Behind*, is represented here by “Beautiful Day” and “Stuck in a Moment You Can’t Get Out Of,” while the *Batman Forever* soundtrack gives us “Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me, Kill Me,” exactly as glitzy and unmemorable as the film itself.

Best of 1990–2000 offers two new tracks. The single “Electrical Storm,” a slightly disappointing tale of tempestuous romance, is again in the vein of the old, banner-waving U2, though it lacks the youthful fervor that made them stirring even when they were preachy.

Then there’s “The Hands That Built America.” Written for Martin Scorsese’s long-awaited movie *Gangs of New York*, the song’s subject is that ancient favorite of Irish folk songs: the laborer facing exile from his green fields (“Diggin’ in our pockets for a reason not to say goodbye”) as he ventures to New York City, joining the swarming tribe of his countrymen at work on a rising skyline. Again, it’s old-school U2, a long way from the futuristic sheen of ZooTV, evincing a simple, timeless beauty. Finally, as with its predecessor, early editions of this set arrive with a bonus disc of B-sides.

So that’s the second decade of U2, wrapped up for posterity. These were feverish years, when the band reveled in the messiness of the modern world and harbored no illusions about the depths of their confusion. Will there be a third installment to the story? God only knows — provided Bono has told Him, of course. *PAUL DU NOYER*



> U2 came a long way in two decades.



This page: Paul Bergen/Redline/Retna Ltd. Opposite page: Anton Corbijn



U2, from left: The Edge,
Bono, Larry Mullen Jr.,
Adam Clayton

BLACK SABBATH

SYMPTOM OF THE UNIVERSE: THE ORIGINAL BLACK SABBATH (1970–1978) ★★★★★

RHINO/WARNER BROS.

Before Ozzy turned into Ward Cleaver, he fronted the world's greatest heavy-metal band

According to TV sitcom star Ozzy Osbourne, Black Sabbath was founded on the observation that people love horror movies — and might also love a band that was like a horror movie. The 1970 song “Black Sabbath,” a crushing

depiction of a witch-burning, introduced a sense of doom previously unknown to rock music, and — eye of newt! — heavy metal was born. This 29-track collection updates Sabbath's 1976 anthology, *We Sold Our Souls for Rock and Roll*, by including the wheat (1976's sneering courtesan tribute “Dirty Women”) from otherwise chaff-filled late-'70s albums. From the lumbering “Iron Man” to the quasi-funky “Children of the Grave” (which Blondie rewrote as “Call Me”) to the cocaine terror of “Snowblind,” this is metal's Old Testament.

ROB KEMP



Black Sabbath set the standard for heavy-metal mustaches.

Pittsburgh of England — that specialized in white-noise grumpiness and lo-fi technique to make serious electronic music for people who'd rather read than dance. “Nag Nag Nag,” from 1979, was their early highlight, with squawk-box vocals evoking scratchy old newsreels of ranting dictators. “Yashar,” from '82, calls to mind rush hour in Damascus, or maybe Nairobi. Not just minimal and

monotonous, but globalist too, Cabaret Voltaire are a quaint footnote in the history of pointy-headed rock.

MAT SNOW

JOHN COLTRANE

A LOVE SUPREME (DELUXE EDITION) ★★★★★

IMPULSE!

The one record you need, if you need only one 1960s jazz record

Even in its initial transfers to CD, *A Love Supreme* never sounded bad. But now, reworked by original engineer Rudy Van Gelder, it sounds noticeably better. Listen to the four-part suite on disc one: With clearer fidelity, you can hear the space around Elvin Jones's whomped tom-tom hits and the slab-like depth and slight echo of Jimmy Garrison's bass notes, while the dry weight of Coltrane's tenor saxophone expresses his vision of economy. On disc two, listen to the only live version of “A Love Supreme,” from 1965, and some studio outtakes from a session with Archie Shepp and Art Davis added to the band. The live version is severe and wild, all you expect of Coltrane, and the Shepp-Davis session is carnival-esque. Conclusion: The original album really is a masterpiece, and it's good to hear why.

BEN RATLIFF

THE SCORE

★★★★★

EXCELLENT. A MUST-HAVE

★★★★

GREAT. CHECK IT OUT

★★★

VERY GOOD IN ITS GENRE

★★

JUST OK

★

WEAK

CABARET VOLTAIRE

THE BEST OF CABARET VOLTAIRE ★★

MUTE

You like Suicide, Chrome, Devo and Throbbing Gristle? Then you'll ♥ these British grumps

There's a strand of musical DNA connecting Public Enemy's “Don't Believe the Hype” to the Human League's “Don't You Want Me Baby?” That strand is Cabaret Voltaire, a trio — Stephen Mallinder, Richard H. Kirk and Chris Watson, from Sheffield, the

Loose Lips

Anthologies of the Flaming Lips' really silly early years

THE FLAMING LIPS

FINALLY THE PUNK ROCKERS ARE TAKING ACID ★★

THE DAY THEY SHOT A HOLE IN THE JESUS EGG ★★

RYKODISC



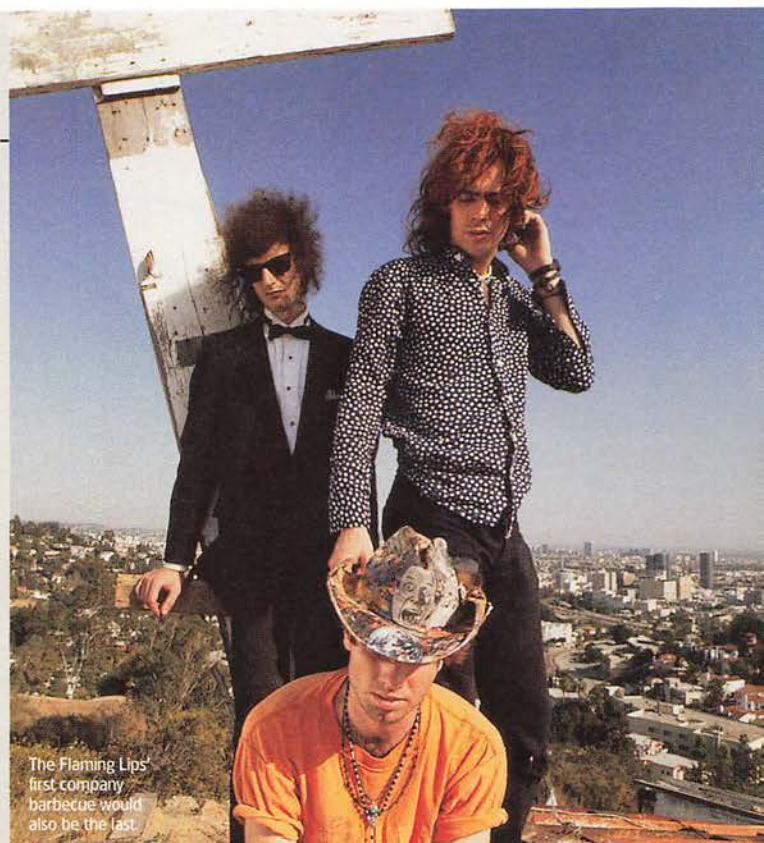
BEFORE THE Flaming Lips began crafting glorious psychedelic epics such as this year's *Yoshimi Battles the Pink Robots*, the Oklahoma trio was better known for recklessly hurling fireworks onstage during its concerts than for its music.

The reason for this is evident on *Finally the Punk Rockers Are Taking Acid*, which, Lips leader Wayne Coyne warns, includes “unreleased demos, unglorious failures and unrealized ideas.” The triple-disc collection shows the nascent Lips moving from standard-issue post-punk tub-thumping with a side of aimless angst (“I want my own planet, 'cause this one is a drag,” from the great

garage-rock spurt “My Own Planet”) to stirrings of their idiosyncratic psychedelia on “She Is Death.”

The Lips were so busy grasping for an identity that they forgot to write proper songs, and the anemic guitar fuzz exposes Coyne's vocal limitations: His assault on “After the Goldrush” makes Neil Young's original sound like Plácido Domingo. There's shambolic charm here, but three CDs is more shambolic charm than anyone needs.

Things improve slightly on *The Day They Shot a Hole in the Jesus Egg*. Producer Dave Fridmann and Mercury Rev singer-guitarist Jonathan Donahue are onboard, leading to a thick, satisfying racket. More crucially, songwriting replaces zaniness as the *raison d'être*. “Unconsciously Screaming” and “Shine On Sweet Jesus” offer glimpses of greatness, but still suggest cult obscurity as the Lips' fate. Within four years, they had their lone hit, “She Don't Use Jelly.” Promoting it with a guest spot on *Beverly Hills 90210*, they looked stupefied by this mainstream turn of events. These CDs show why. ALEXIS PETRIDIS



The Flaming Lips' first company barbecue would also be the last.

THE DAMNED

DAMNED DAMNED DAMNED
★★★

MUSIC FOR PLEASURE ★★

SMASH IT UP: THE
ANTHOLOGY 1976-1987
★★★★

ESSENTIAL/CASTLE

First two albums and a hefty
compilation from oft-forgotten
British punk pioneers

Unusually for the first generation of British punks, the Damned played with smiles on their faces — and as a result, like Blink-182 and Bowling for Soup today, were never taken seriously. They even sang love songs, bless them. First released in February 1977, *Damned Damned Damned*, their debut, featured the storming "New Rose" (later covered by Guns N' Roses) and "Neat Neat Neat" (an occasional in Elvis Costello's sets), building an orgy of frantic punk nonsense. Just nine months later, the Damned's psychedelic tinge reared its multicolored head on the stodgy *Music for Pleasure*, produced by Pink Floyd drummer Nick Mason. They would do better work, mostly on *Machine Gun Etiquette* and *The Black Album*, which provide the highlights of the splendid two-CD compilation *Smash It Up*. And they're still going....
JOHN AIZLEWOOD

FANNY

FIRST TIME IN A LONG TIME —
THE REPRISE RECORDINGS
★★★

RHINO/HANDMADE

Historically significant girl rockers
could play pretty well — when
producers left them alone

At a time when Helen Reddy was the most prominent woman in pop, Fanny argued for women's right to play traditional rock. This impressive work of archaeology — 90 tracks on four discs — covers the Los Angeles quartet's 1970-1973 output, collecting their first four albums along with demos, singles, outtakes and radio ads. Lacking a standout singer and stifled by bossy producers Richard Perry and Todd Rundgren, guitarist June Millington, bassist Jean Millington, keyboardist Nickey Barclay and drummer Alice de Buhr never hit their stride as a unit, but left behind some strong performances regardless. The tender ballad "You've Got a Home," a tale of single parenthood, and the rousing "Charity Ball" are polished, radio-friendly fare. Exciting lo-fi live recordings reveal a rowdier Fanny, with the explosive "Place in the Country" and a bawdy



Fanny: That's right. They're called Fanny.

version of Ike Turner's "Young and Dumb" exploring a path not taken in the studio, unfortunately. Available from rhinohandmade.com.

JON YOUNG

INXS

KICK ★★★

X ★★

WELCOME TO WHEREVER
YOU ARE ★★

THE BEST OF INXS ★★★★★

RHINO/ATLANTIC

The Australian pretty boys' finest
hours — recalled in time for their
latest tour

The story of how six Australian bar-rockers spent the late '80s exporting American-style rock back to the U.S. is one of the music industry's more unlikely tales. Yet there's no question that 1987's *Kick*

deserved to sell 6 million-plus copies, thanks to a combination of fabulous tunes — "Never Tear Us Apart" still stands as one of the all-time great ballads — and singer Michael Hutchence's flamboyant charms. *X* (1990) had its moments, including "Suicide Blonde" (which gained resonance after Hutchence's mysterious 1997 death), but *X* and →

INXS's Michael
Hutchence braces
for a cavity search.



TONY HAWK

Skateboard god,
host of this fall's
skate-punk Boom
Boom Huck Jam
Arena Tour



N.E.R.D.
IN SEARCH OF... VIRGIN

"It's a unique blend of
hip-hop and hard rock,
and I have yet to tire of it"

LAST ALBUM YOU BOUGHT?

STEVIE WONDER

AS SEEN ON
TV

THE DEFINITIVE COLLECTION

IN STORES OCTOBER 29th

TO CELEBRATE THE 40TH YEAR OF A REMARKABLE CAREER, COMES THE RELEASE OF THE FIRST AND ONLY COMPLETE STEVIE WONDER CAREER SPANNING HITS COLLECTION EVER ON A SINGLE DISC!

FEATURING 21 HITS FROM STEVIE'S CLASSIC ALBUMS

- 80 Minutes Of Music Spanning His Entire Career
- Features Eight #1 Pop Hits And 15 #1 R&B Hits
- Includes the rare 45 version of "You Are The Sunshine Of My Life"
- Features "Do I Do," the basis for Ja Rule's recent amash, "Livin' It Up"
- 16 page full color booklet with essay, songography and photos



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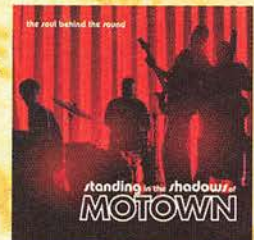
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Teacher's Pets

Ten years later, Pavement's debut remains the great — if indecipherable — indie-rock statement

PAVEMENT

SLANTED AND ENCHANTED

★★★★

MATADOR



PAVEMENT BEGAN their 1992 debut with a defacement of the dumbest pop the '90s had known: "Ice, baby," singer Stephen Malkmus draws, a chuckle lodged in his throat.

Stewing over the crap on the radio, burning to prove that their misery and confusion deserved attention at least as much as Vanilla Ice did, the five guys in Pavement started screwing around in a garage studio. They were in the right place (nowhere, a.k.a. Stockton, California) at the right time — when smart, moody guys were searching for a band that looked like them.

On *Slanted and Enchanted*, Pavement caught the moment when the time on your hands feels like it really is all yours, maybe for the last time in

your life. This two-CD expansion features scads of singles, live performances and hard-to-find EP tunes, but its heart is the album itself, billed as "remastered." That's got to be another joke: *Slanted* spoke a fresh, unintelligible language of noise. But below the wordy muttering, punk guitar and lo-fi tomfoolery, Malkmus bared his slack, insecure self to the world, as vulnerable and likeable as Jake Gyllenhaal dressed for a night in downtown New York.

The extra tracks show how insanely productive this band was, turning out flexidiscs and compilation tracks almost as fast as it turned out puns and shrieks. The incredible *Watery, Domestic* EP is here, and so is a smashing December 1992 live performance in London that catches them at their peak — hampered by none of the indifferent goofing that often marked their shows.

The bonus tracks are a nice... bonus, but the focus remains the original *Slanted*: It steered the music of Beck and the Strokes, and it made noise seem as essential as words. *RJ SMITH*

Pavement: Dressed for a third-grade class photo



1992's *Welcome* didn't achieve *Kick's* sales. *The Best of INXS* throws in a couple of unreleased tracks, attracting and/or infuriating INXS completists.

CLARK COLLIS

JUNIOR KIMBROUGH

YOU BETTER RUN: THE ESSENTIAL JUNIOR KIMBROUGH

★★★★

FAT POSSUM

The last gasp of blues authenticity

This North Mississippi hill country bluesman, a favorite of everyone from Charlie Feathers to Iggy Pop, released his first full album in 1992 and died six years later. His droning, one-chord, barbed-wire blues were primordial and hypnotically repetitive, and came from a horrifyingly dark place; they were almost completely improvised (yet seamless) and hit like a medicine ball. Summoning ancient field hollers and modern electric boogies alike, Kimbrough could make you simultaneously squirm queasily and dance joyously with fare like "You Better Run." Fans can question which performances are most essential — these 12 will do — but few dispute that Kimbrough was most likely the essential bluesman of the late twentieth century.

JOHN MORTHLAND

THE METERS

THE ESSENTIALS

★★★

A hard-core celebration of New Orleans funkateers and their original, strutting style

At the back end of the 1960s, the Meters put New Orleans on the dance-floor map when they stripped down Stax's layered, big band-ish funk

sophistication to its core. Their sinewy, slapping workouts ("Cissy Strut," "Ease Back" and "Sophisticated Cissy") form the missing link between Southern-fried R&B and '70s street funk, with keyboards and guitar as percussion devices, call-and-response chant vocals and scant concern for anything you could whistle creating fragmented, concentric rhythm patterns. While *Essentials* extends into their less uncompromising early-'70s work — when they broke down and wrote

conventional funk songs — the 12 tracks here offer far less of this inimitable Southern funk than earlier, more generous collections.

LLOYD BRADLEY

LOU REED

TRANSFORMER

★★★★

New Yawk maverick gets commercial makeover from Ziggy Stardust, reaps chart reward

Many Velvet Underground purists were appalled by 1972's *Transformer*. Lacking the gritty textures of his previous work, Lou Reed's second solo album took a glossy pop shine from producer David Bowie, then on the crest of his own early success, and Bowie guitarist Mick Ronson. But the underlying sensibility remains the same. Reed's trademark misfits and deviants take center stage for the rocking sarcasm of "Vicious" ("You hit me with a flower"), the catty yet tender "New York Telephone Conversation" and "Walk on the Wild Side," the playful saga of bad behavior that brought him his only hit single. (Two bonus tracks — solo acoustic demos of "Hangin' Round" and the heartbreaking "Perfect Day" — offer a tantalizing parallel-universe glimpse of Lou Reed the folk singer.) While you could very



Lou Reed: Even his socks and underwear were black.

easily call *Transformer* a sellout, it's a terrifically engaging one.

JON YOUNG

ROLLING STONES

FORTY LICKS ★★★★★

ABKCO/VIRGIN

First career-spanning retrospective with a quartet of new tracks thrown in for (not-so-) good measure

"I'm losing my touch," wheezes Keith Richards, sounding near death on one of *Forty Licks*' four new tracks. The guitarist claims the song — a funeral ballad also entitled "Losing My Touch" — is "about a guy on the run." But it's impossible not to be reminded of Richards and Mick Jagger themselves, who lost their songwriting touch after 1981's *Tattoo You*. None of the newies, which also include the chooglin' Tom Petty-ish single "Don't Stop," will replace, say, "Brown Sugar" atop the Stones' accomplishments. Yet as the first hits collection to unite their entire career, *Forty Licks* stands as the definitive look at the most definitively great rock & roll band ever.

CLARK COLLIS

RUN-DMC

GREATEST HITS ★★★★★

BMG HERITAGE

A decade of hits from the Queens, New York, trio that turned the world onto a little thing called hip-hop

The first rappers to go platinum and earn Grammy respect, Run-DMC helped establish hip-hop as more than a gold-chained flash in the pan (though their signature black derbies never did catch on). Only one song here was released after 1988; nonetheless, this collection wrests the group from the novelty bin of old-school nostalgia, capturing the exuberant, raw experimentalism that characterized early rap's best. "Walk This Way" and "It's Tricky" highlight Run-DMC's intimacy with hard rock, while the spare electro of "You Talk Too Much" — its overemphasized rhymes stick like glue to prominent, pounding drums — reads like a defense of their ultrabasic styles. "Beats to the Rhyme" foreshadows the gritty minimalism of the mid-'90s and, like most of the 18 cuts here, has since been sampled to the marrow.

JONAH WEINER

LAST ALBUM YOU BOUGHT?



REBECCA ROMIJN-STAMOS
X-Men hottie



SOUTH PARK: BIGGER, LONGER & UNCUT
SOUNDTRACK ATLANTIC

"My assistant on the *X-Men* set is named Kyle, so I'm always singing, 'Kyle's mom is a big fat bitch!'"

SANTANA

THE ESSENTIAL SANTANA

★★★★★

COLUMBIA

Thirty years before *Supernatural*, Carlos Santana was an expert at throwing multiculti parties

Sure, Carlos Santana's songbook is loaded with idealistic hippie-era notions of brotherhood, and heavy on jazz-fusion noodling. But say this for him: He makes his guitar sing. Blessed with a blazing-arrow tone and a bluesman's restraint, he earns a place among six-string greats not for technical brilliance, but for his ability to massage an ordinary theme until it

Carlos Santana: He usually wears a hat. Here's why.

becomes pure and luminous. This anthology, which leans on

the first few Santana albums from 1969 forward, follows his development: caressing the imploring theme of the instrumental "Europa," thrashing through an exploratory live "In a Silent Way," burrowing into the call-and-response refrains of "Evil Ways." The first disc is wall-to-wall brilliance, and the second, focusing on his '80s experiments, offers unexpected pleasures, including the riveting "Blues for Salvador."

TOM MOON →



Heavy gold chains make Run-DMC fall over.

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BLENDER'S PROMOTIONAL SECTION

GUEST LIST

These guys are always "on the list"...



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THE GUIDE REISSUES

SIOUXSIE AND THE BANSHEES

THE VERY BEST OF ★★

GEFFEN

Frosty post-punk that led an era of art-schoolers to wear black mascara

Siouxsie and the Banshees sprang from the British punk scene that spawned the Sex Pistols, but they didn't play punk rock. Like the Cure's Robert Smith (himself a former Banshee), singer Siouxsie Sioux specialized in frosty, atmospheric pieces shaped by shimmering guitars and ominous lyrics. This perfect-for-late-night collection showcases songs that made them a fixture on the British charts from the late '70s through the '80s, plus their biggest U.S. hit, 1991's Middle Eastern-flavored "Kiss Them for Me." While Siouxsie's absurdly solemn vocals flirt with self-parody, there's spooky power in the brittle rocker "Spellbound," the melancholy "Christine" and a swirling cover of the Beatles' "Dear Prudence." A pointless bonus disc of remixes stretches songs as long as nine minutes, breaking the spell.

JON YOUNG

VARIOUS ARTISTS

THE HEART AND SOUL OF BERT BERN'S ★★★

UNIVERSAL

An overdue tribute to the man who brought us "Twist and Shout" and "Cry to Me"

All Tin Pan Alley songwriters dream of writing a "Twist and Shout," an "Everybody Needs Somebody to Love" or a "Piece of My Heart," if only so they can afford to stop working in an alley. Bert Berns, a New York Jew who loved salsa and other Latin musics, not only penned all three, but also brilliantly produced their first interpretations — by the Isley Brothers, Solomon Burke and Erma Franklin, respectively. Sadly, 35 years after his death, Berns has become one of soul's forgotten greats despite his copious talents. While *Heart and Soul* features all three of the tracks mentioned above, there are a number of unfortunate omissions, including such essential mid-'60s mementos as "I Want Candy," "Hang on Sloopy" and, above all others, Van Morrison's classic version of Berns's "Here Comes the Night."

CLARK COLLIS

Blender Approved

The pick of recent reissues



ROLLING STONES

LET IT BLEED

ABKCO

Several of these epics remained staples of Stones tours over four decades. "This record should be played loud," declare the liner notes. Better obey.



N.W.A.

STRAIGHT OUTTA COMPTON

RUTHLESS/PRIORITY

On their second album, Dr. Dre and Ice Cube carjacked Public Enemy's fierce politics, inventing the West Coast's graphic gangsta-scapes.



X

MORE FUN IN THE NEW WORLD

RHINO/ELEKTRA

The last of four straight epics from Los Angeles's great punks, a bohemian howl of despair at 1983: "This was supposed to be the new world!"



JONATHAN RICHMAN

HOME OF THE HITS

SANCTUARY

A generous disc of vital Richman, from post-punk thrills to troubadour giggles, plus a cool disc by label-mates Greg Kihn and the Rubinoos.

REISSUES IN BRIEF >>>>>>

BY ROB KEMP

BLONDIE

GREATEST HITS ★★★★★

EMI/CAPITOL

Blondie were considered the flashy sellouts of New York's late-'70s punk scene, but here's the last laugh: Sometimes fluff endures. Using new wave as a foundation for mixing an array of styles, Blondie made magnificent singles, including the elegant, discotic "Heart of Glass," the calypso homage "The Tide Is High" and the girl-group kitsch of "In the Flesh."

DAVID BOWIE

BEST OF BOWIE ★★★★★

VIRGIN

A new Bowie collection seems to come out every year, which is probably how he became one of the richest men in rock. But this well-chosen two-CD retrospective puts the still-eclectic "Space Oddity," the poignant "Heroes" and the ripsnorting "Modern Love" in the same spot, and even makes 1987's rotten "Time Will Crawl" and 1993's limp "Jump They Say" seem better.

FLEETWOOD MAC

THE VERY BEST OF FLEETWOOD MAC ★★★★★

REPRISE

In 1975, a worn-down British blues band brought on a pair of love-struck American songwriters. Two divorces, several affairs and enough cocaine to kill Tony Montana somehow yielded graceful, sun-kissed music about lovelorn dysfunction and haunted memories. By far the best Fleetwood Mac compilation yet.

David Bowie:
"Scissors beats
paper!"

MIX MASTER MIKE

RETURN OF THE CYCLOPS ★★

ASPHODEL

The resident DJ on the Beastie Boys' *Hello Nasty* (1998), Mix Master Mike is a world-class turntablist, less interested in showy scratching than in making catchy grooves. Highlights of this fine rarities collection include the Tourette's-like outbursts of curses and yelps in "Grudge Match" and the detuned synth on "Counter Attack."

JIMMY PAGE

NO INTRODUCTION NECESSARY ★★

PURPLE PYRAMID

Before Led Zeppelin's golden-god rampages, Page was the busiest

Now Blondie
need a new
drummer.



Linda Ronstadt:
WET PAINT sign
not pictured

session guitarist in London. The first 14 tracks feature him with Zep bassist John Paul Jones and Keith de Groot, a singer justly ignored by history, playing such '50s rock chestnuts as "Rave On." Next, Page joins with drummer John Bonham and caterwauler Screaming Lord Sutch on six thunderous 1970 cuts, proving how boring blues-rock was pre-Zeppelin.

LOU REED

TAKE NO PRISONERS ★★

BMG HERITAGE

In which the avatar of New York cool decides what he really wants to do is... comedy! Between odd, soul-band renditions of "Sweet Jane" and "Walk on the Wild Side," a slurring Reed insults the audience (and noted rock critics) like some kind of borscht-belt punk. "Nobody," he snaps, "ever said I was taste-ful." This grotesque, fascinating 1978 live album proves his point.

LINDA RONSTADT

THE VERY BEST OF LINDA RONSTADT ★★

RHINO/ELEKTRA

The sexpot of '70s California rock never met a sweet melody she couldn't turn sweeter with her glorious, classically trained soprano. Country-ish tunes like "Love Is a Rose," sweeping Motown ballads, even Chuck Berry covers — she makes each of them gleam like a newlywed's silver.

ZAPPA PICKS: LARRY LALONDE ★★ JON FISHMAN ★★

RYKODISC

Investigating the sprawling catalog of avant-rock iconoclast Frank Zappa is daunting, so ex-Primus guitarist Larry LaLonde and Phish drummer Jon Fishman narrow their favorite selections to one CD each. Both vacillate between smutty riffs on rock culture and incredibly knotty compositions, and both offer fine introductions to Zappa, who loved modern classical music and poop jokes equally.

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John Lennon



Being in the world's biggest band was never enough for John Lennon. Even before the Beatles' 1970

breakup, he was making wild sound experiments with Yoko Ono and writing songs that aimed to stop war and change history. Then he just got drunk. In his solo years, his restless creativity explored nearly every extreme of the human condition. From druggy despair to paternal pride, he made a disc to document every milestone in his extraordinary life.
By Paul Du Noyer

BLENDER APPROVED

JOHN LENNON/PLASTIC ONO BAND CAPITOL, 1970 ★★★★★



Brutally truthful self-exploration was Lennon's game, and he perfected the trick on his first post-Beatles album. Although his new style was stark, he was also driven by the urge to communicate — so he dropped the avant-garde dabbling that Yoko Ono had encouraged, and the resulting songs were raw and bloody. Lennon confronted his past and present with unflinching honesty and passionate eloquence.

Standout tracks: "Mother," "Working Class Hero," "God"

IMAGINE CAPITOL, 1971 ★★★★★



Lennon never stopped craving success. *Imagine* was more commercial than anything he'd done outside of the Beatles, and self-laceration gave way to romantic string arrangements (courtesy of Phil Spector), hearty rock & roll and a title track that touched a universal chord. With a final hymn of hate to Paul McCartney ("How Do You Sleep?"),

Lennon sold his mansion in England and sailed to New York. He would never go home again.

Standout tracks: "Imagine," "How Do You Sleep?," "Jealous Guy"

"... and then I shouted 'koo-koo-ka-choo!' and I made Paul McCartney disappear."



GREAT

JOHN LENNON & YOKO ONO DOUBLE FANTASY CAPITOL, 1980 ★★★★



On his return from five years of seclusion, Lennon promised "an exploration of sexual fantasies between men and women."

By alternating his songs with Ono's, the couple laid bare their relationship; amid tender expressions of family devotion are frank confessions of their stormy moments. *Double Fantasy's* sales received a gruesome boost a few weeks after its release, thanks to five bullets from Mark David Chapman's gun.

Standout tracks: "Beautiful Boy (Darling Boy)," "Woman"

THE JOHN LENNON COLLECTION CAPITOL, 1982 ★★★★



Currently the best American collection of the standouts from Lennon's solo material, from *Plastic Ono Band* through the final sessions.

Initially marred only by the omission of his anguished heroin-withdrawal diary "Cold Turkey," a song now included on the album.

Standout tracks: "Instant Karma!," "Happy Xmas (War Is Over)"

WONSAPONATIME CAPITOL, 1998 ★★★★



A single-disc digest of the four-CD *Anthology*, comprising outtakes and rarities from Lennon's last years. Highlights include George Martin's

sumptuous rearrangement of the *Milk and Honey* track "Grow Old With Me," the wickedly funny Dylan satire "Serve Yourself" and the original draft of "Real Love."

Standout tracks: "Serve Yourself," "Grow Old With Me"

He never stopped craving success — *Imagine* was more commercial than anything he'd done outside the Beatles.

CHECK IT OUT

WALLS AND BRIDGES CAPITOL, 1974
★★★



The "lost weekend" album: Estranged from Ono, he drank himself into a stupor and reveled in self-pity. The desolation yielded a career-reviving number 1

single, "Whatever Gets You Thru the Night." **Standout tracks:** "Steel and Glass," "#9 Dream," "Scared"

ROCK'N'ROLL CAPITOL, 1975
★★★



Golden-oldie covers forced on him to settle a copyright dispute with Chuck Berry's publisher. Lennon loved the 1950s, though, and it certainly shows.

Standout track: "Stand by Me"

JOHN LENNON & YOKO ONO MILK AND HONEY POLYDOR, 1984
★★★



Four years after Lennon's murder, Ono plumbed the *Double Fantasy* session leftovers and assembled a second his-'n'-hers song dialogue.

Standout track: "Grow Old With Me"

MENLOVE AVE. CAPITOL, 1986
★★★



An underrated rummage through the archives. Early, unadorned versions of tracks from *Walls and Bridges* sound as scary as anything he ever did.

Standout track: "Here We Go Again"

ANTHOLOGY CAPITOL, 1998
★★★



As an addendum to the Beatles' *Anthology*, Ono gathered a box of unreleased material: four CDs of Lennon's last years in London, his NYC radical phase, the

"lost weekend" and Dakota demos. Humor and humanity shine through the fragments. **Standout track:** "Long Lost John"

BE CAREFUL

SHAVED FISH CAPITOL, 1975
★★★



For years this was the standard Lennon best-of, and it still serves that purpose if you don't mind missing his 1980 comeback material. Upon its release in

1975, he retired to his Dakota apartment in Manhattan with Ono and newborn Sean. **Standout track:** "Cold Turkey"

THE PLASTIC ONO BAND LIVE PEACE IN TORONTO CAPITOL, 1969
★★★



The Plastic Ono Band (with Eric Clapton) was put together in a few hours to headline a Canadian show on September 13, 1969; the group rehearsed

on the flight from London. Lennon was sick from nerves and heroin, but the first half rocks. Then Ono takes over. . .

Standout track: "Yer Blues"

JOHN & YOKO/ PLASTIC ONO BAND SOME TIME IN NEW YORK CITY CAPITOL, 1972
★★★



Newly arrived in Greenwich Village, Lennon used a bar band, Elephant's Memory, to amplify his political radicalism. Ireland, black power and feminism

get the sloganeering treatment, but shallow politics hold him back. Disc two is Ono-dominated live cuts, defiantly tuneless.

Standout track: "Woman Is the Nigger of the World"

MIND GAMES CAPITOL, 1973
★★★



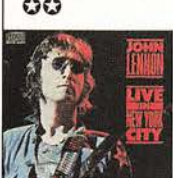
Bored, listless and depressed by the failure of *Some Time in New York City*, Lennon turned out a set he called "rock & roll at different speeds." Too bad it

coincided with Paul McCartney's Wings triumph *Band on the Run*. Even Ringo was doing better at the time.

Standout track: "Mind Games"

FOR FANS ONLY

LIVE IN NEW YORK CITY CAPITOL, 1986
★★★



A rare return to the stage for a 1972 charity bash at Madison Square Garden. The band is basic but powerful, and Lennon's on

form vocally; it's a shame, though, that his set avoids Beatles material in favor of numbers from *Some Time in New York City*.

Standout track: "Cold Turkey"

JOHN LENNON & YOKO ONO UNFINISHED MUSIC NO. 1: TWO VIRGINS RYKODISC, 1968
★



A 33-minute sound collage of distant conversation, wind and footsteps, *Unfinished Music* celebrated the consummation of

Lennon and Ono's love affair, using a musical style he reprised a few weeks later on the Beatles' "Revolution 9." The music was less newsworthy than the nude cover shot.

Standout track: "Remember Love"

JOHN LENNON & YOKO ONO UNFINISHED MUSIC NO. 2: LIFE WITH THE LIONS RYKODISC, 1969
★



Tired of Beatlehood, Lennon was open to Ono's avant-garde proposal: Skill is irrelevant, concept is everything. Ono shrieks; random sounds are looped.

Only a two-minute silent track is bearable. **Standout track:** "Two Minutes Silence"

JOHN LENNON & YOKO ONO WEDDING ALBUM RYKODISC, 1969
★



John cries "Yoko!" Yoko cries "John!" Repeat for 22 minutes. Lennon began to tire of such shenanigans after this. The second track, "Amsterdam,"

contains antiwar interviews from their Bed-In for Peace at the Amsterdam Hilton. **Standout track:** "Amsterdam"

FURTHER LISTENING

DAVID BOWIE YOUNG AMERICANS VIRGIN, 1975
★★★★

Before his five-year vacation from rock & roll, Lennon blessed a rising star with two guest spots on this album: on a version of his and McCartney's "Across the Universe" and on "Fame," a savage indictment of same. The song was cowritten by Lennon, who'd had enough of celebrity, and Bowie, who was hungry for more. **Standout track:** "Fame"

FURTHER VIEWING

IMAGINE: JOHN LENNON WARNER HOME VIDEO, 1988
★★★★

The video/DVD life of Lennon, authorized by Ono. It would be difficult for any one account to do justice to this complex, contradictory man, but the footage, at least, is unrivaled.

FURTHER READING

LENNON: THE DEFINITIVE BIOGRAPHY By Ray Coleman HARPER PERENNIAL, 1992
★★★★★

Pretty much the full story of a flawed but fascinating genius. Uncontroversial compared to Albert Goldman's *The Lives of John Lennon*, but far superior in both accuracy and empathy.

From left, Bruce Springsteen, Patti Scialfa and Little Steven Van Zandt sneezing simultaneously



Meet the New Boss

On the third night of his world tour, Bruce Springsteen unveils a very different show: shorter, riskier and loaded with new songs

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN, NEW YORK

AUGUST 12, 2002

★★★★

» THE FIST-PUMPING starts early. Softly spotlighted, singing over Roy Bittan's wind-swirled keyboard hook, Bruce Springsteen hasn't even broken a sweat as he begins "The Rising," the studiously uplifting title song to his new album. In the Oklahoma drawl he affects for his most serious songs, Springsteen shifts to the emphatic chorus, bolstered by group vocals from the E Street Band, and thousands of fans standing at the front of the stage thrust their fists in the air, celebrating his first New York concert since September 11.

This snapshot — a crowd in T-shirts and sports jerseys roused by an anthem of perseverance — could have come from any Springsteen show since he advanced to arenas in the late '70s. Even before he was a star, the Boss was a legend, earning his nickname with epic concerts that lasted longer than Fellini film festivals. But, as befits his somber, constrained new album, Springsteen has remade his live show in several significant ways.

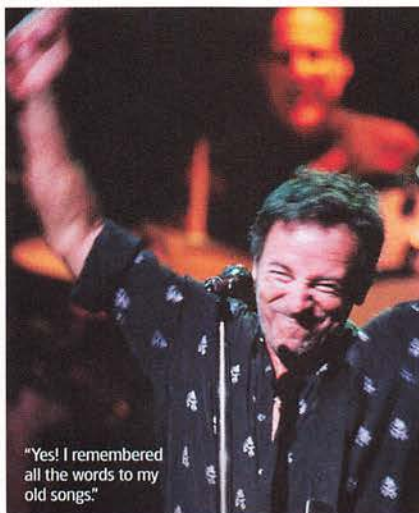
When singer Patti Scialfa joined the band for the *Born in the U.S.A.* tour, Springsteen said the addition of a woman gave his music "more of a feeling of community." For *The Rising*, which is largely about loss and confusion in the wake of September 11 and the salvation that a community can offer, he has expanded the band again, adding a ninth member to the ranks: violinist Soozie Tyrell. Added to four guitar

players, the E Street Band now feels as full as a folk-rock orchestra.

At 52, Springsteen has trimmed his four-hour sets to two and a half; it used to take him nearly that long just to introduce the band. Most dramatically, he's become more stern: This tour challenges fans with a set that's more elegy than party, and withholds a nostalgic blast of greatest hits until the final moments.

Of the first 11 songs in the carefully constructed set, seven are from *The Rising*, the rest from *Darkness on the Edge of Town*. That grueling 1978 album, with its picturesque tales of solitary figures battling desperation, is a brother record to the new one. The older songs pull the band into onstage drama: After a rash guitar solo in "Prove It All Night," Springsteen swaps chorus chants at center mic with his longtime partner Little Steven Van Zandt, as drummer Max Weinberg crashes urgent quarter notes on a cymbal.

Springsteen aspired to write a record that could salve New Yorkers scarred by the terrorist attacks, and the task humbled him; the language on *The Rising* is simple, often Biblical, using the incantatory phrasing of the blues much as Southern songwriter Lucinda Williams does. Although he's ditched the comic routines



"Yes! I remembered all the words to my old songs."

This tour challenges fans with a set that's more elegy than party.

of previous tours, he works to animate this dry material: Following guitarist Nils Lofgren's droning bursts in "The Fuse," Springsteen gasps loudly, triggering a dramatic pause in the song, and throws his arms in the air hopefully as he sings "It's all right," from "Lonesome Day," a lovely centerpiece of the new album.

He high-fives the front row during "Waitin' on a Sunny Day," dances atop Bittan's piano on the strained R&B throwback "Mary's Place," ends "The Promised Land" in a crouch, stomping his leg in time to a harmonica solo, and finishes "Bobby Jean," his tender, manly love song to Van Zandt, to familiar shouts of "*Bruuuuuue!*"

When beloved sidekick Clarence Clemons steps center stage on "Badlands" to play a note-for-note re-creation of his sax solo, fans roar at the ritual. But during a string of three new songs, the sellout crowd of 18,725 grows restless, and the bathroom lines grow long. "Good to be in New York City. I been thinkin' about ya," Springsteen says. His gentle request for quiet fails. "Shut up, ya bastards," he cracks, like an impatient parent.

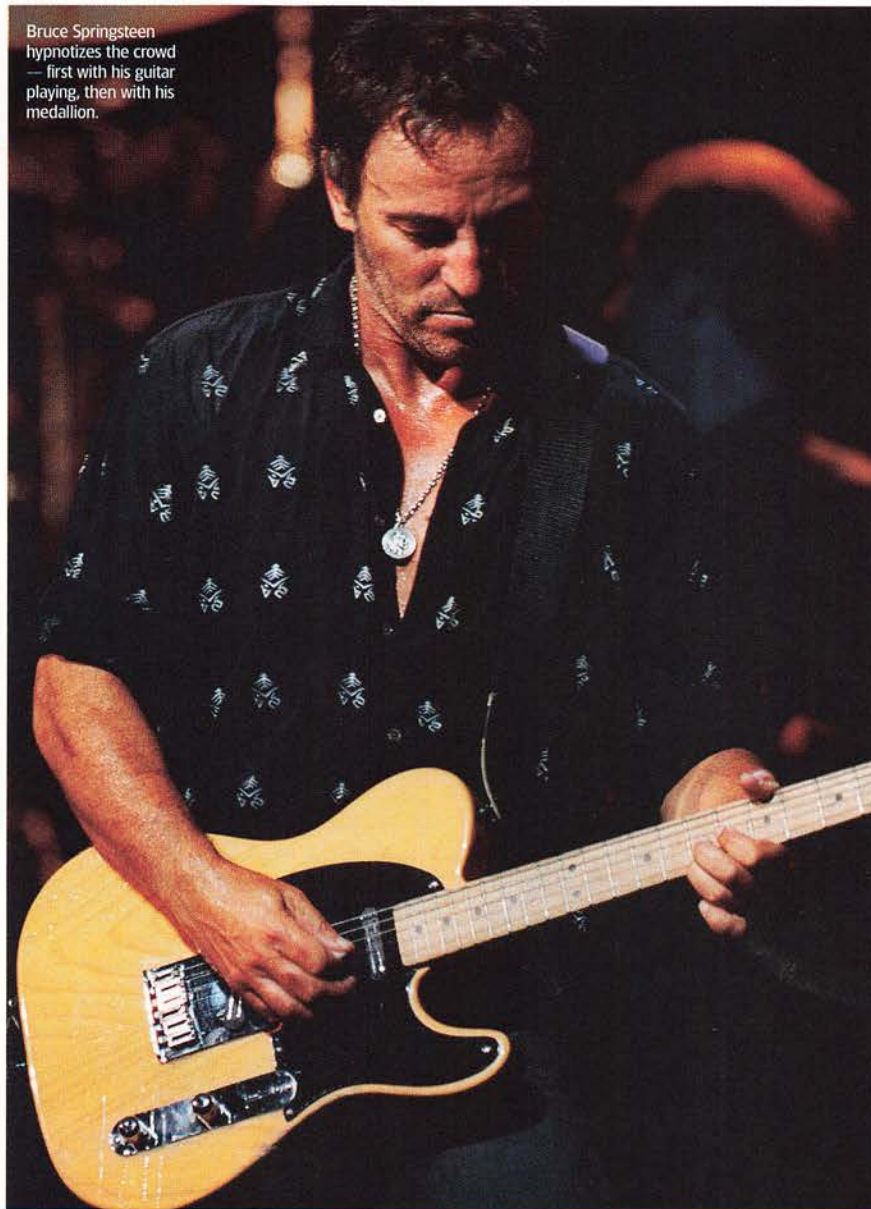
In the next song, "Empty Sky," he sings, "I want an eye for an eye," a passing desire in the mind of a bereaved widow, but the audience lustily shouts its approval. Their misunderstanding of the lyric unfortunately recalls Ronald Reagan's attempt to appropriate "Born in the U.S.A." as a 1984 campaign song.

The Rising uses the call-and-response participation of gospel, but the scale of the music is almost too modest for this basketball arena. The usual mad devotion of a Springsteen show fades for periods, then bursts at the encores: first, a troubled version of "Thunder Road," usually a song about escape, then a huge, twangy "Glory Days," with the organ hook inspiring a funky-chicken dance from Clemons.

The house lights come up for "Born to Run" and "Born in the U.S.A." — not the spare, harsh versions of recent tours, but raucous, crowd-pleasing renditions, the former with an extended pause before the "last chance power drive" of the closing verse, the latter accelerated by Garry Tallent's diving bass runs and a long, bitter guitar solo that peaks with Springsteen hammering his tremolo bar.

Years ago, he said an ideal rock concert was "a combination of a circus, a political thing and a spiritual event." With 22 songs packed into a quickly paced set, the *Rising* tour traces a broad emotional range, from anguish to release. Eleven months after September 11, though, Springsteen's New York fans clearly wanted more circus, and less spirituality. **ROB TANNENBAUM**

Bruce Springsteen hypnotizes the crowd — first with his guitar playing, then with his medallion.



BLENDER ASKS, HOW'D YOU LIKE THE SHOW?



KATE PUNDIK AND KENNY LOADHOLT

STUDENT, 19;
RECORD LABEL
ADMINISTRATOR, 22

KENNY: "On the way in, this guy pointed at us, like 'What are these kids doing here?'"
KATE: "It was parents' night out!"



JIMMY NICHOLAS AND FRAN COSTIGAN

COMMERCIAL PRINTER, 56;
PASTRY TEACHER, 58

FRAN: "The new songs mean something different to me than just 9/11!"
JIMMY: "You saw a lot of emotion. People were definitely affected by it."



DONNA AND BOB MERCER

BARTENDER, 45;
INDUSTRIAL MECHANIC, 49

BOB: "Bruce sings to the guy who's down in the street. He's been singing to us since '75, when we first saw him."
DONNA: "I wanted to hear 'Jersey Girl.'"



GARY LOWITT

REAL ESTATE DEVELOPER, 37

"Max Weinberg looked like an accountant sitting back there. The rest look like rock musicians, and he's sitting there all clean-cut. But he's great. The whole band is great."
JONAH WEINER

Vintage Guns

Still not ready to release a new album, Axl Rose revisits old songs and drops his pants

GUNS N' ROSES

LONDON ARENA, LONDON, ENGLAND

AUGUST 26, 2002

★★★★

➤➤ NOT EVERY BAND can inspire grown fans to wear Kentucky Fried Chicken buckets on their heads. Tonight's headwear of choice, scattered throughout the crowd of 10,000, honors new Guns N' Roses guitarist Buckethead, whose onstage gear — a KFC bucket and white kabuki mask — adds a twenty-first-century twist to GN'R, the pre-eminent American hard-rock band of the last 25 years. There's a visible divide among the British crowd between younger metal buffs who love every disjointed note of Buckethead's solo records, and reformed (read: shorn) '80s fans reliving their imaginary misspent youths.

This is Guns N' Roses 2002: Axl Rose plus new, ill-fitting friends. Now we get Buckethead, spawn of New York's avant-funk clique, and former Nine Inch Nails

guitarist Robin Finck, looking futuristic with his partially shaved head, peeling off possibly the worst guitar solo ever before "Sweet Child o'

Mine." GN'R look like three different bands rolled into one. But when they play 10 songs from 1987's legend-making debut, *Appetite for Destruction*, no one minds the eyesores.

Throughout a brutish opening "Welcome to the Jungle," all eyes are drawn to Rose, chunkier than before under his Oakland Raiders jersey and sporting braids that make him look like Christina Aguilera's older brother. He's also got a new, self-deprecating tone. "Nice to be back in England. Bet you thought I didn't know where the fuck I was," he quips, referring to the previous week's rumors that he was fat, drugged out and mentally incapacitated. Soon the old riot-starting Rose reappears: He drops his leather pants during "Patience" ("Hey, I'm getting hot in here") and shuffles around the stage, exposing his gingery calf hair. Looking

GN'R look like three different bands rolled into one.

like a small child who hasn't managed to fix his clothes before leaving the bathroom, his scramble to get his pants back up while he sings suggests unwitting comic genius.

He doesn't bother to introduce new songs from *Chinese Democracy*, the album he's been agonizing over for almost 10 years. The title track has a harsh industrial-pop groove; "Madagascar" and the Zep-like "Rhiad and the Bedouins" deliver concise takes on the vintage GN'R template of sawing riffs; and "The Blues" is a tame ballad that almost morphs into Journey's "Open Arms."

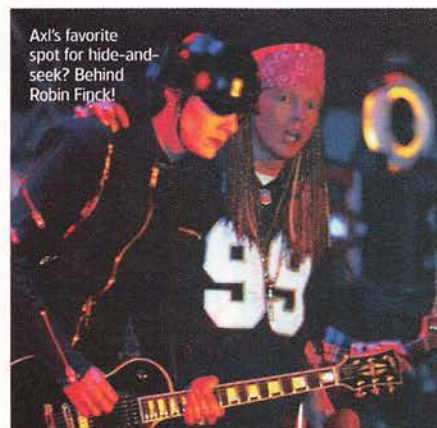
Still, a battering ram of old songs, including a thrilling "You Could Be Mine," keep the

nostalgia level high, and thousands of adults vent their lapsed adolescent ire by bellowing "Why don'tcha just fuck off!" during "It's So Easy." When Rose scoots offstage during the solos, the atmosphere dampens. His seven-strong band, caught between playing music they didn't record and presenting new music the fans haven't heard, shows a precision beyond the original car-wreck GN'R, though even Buckethead lacks the first lineup's dangerous charm.

When confetti cannons explode during the closing "Paradise City," only Rose looks as if he actually belongs on an arena stage. "God save the queen!" he squeals, and then disappears into the night — neither drugged up nor mentally incapacitated, though maybe a little overweight. CARLO TWIST



Axl Rose welcomes us to his jungle, fashion nightmare



Axl's favorite spot for hide-and-seek? Behind Robin Finck!



If Buckethead confuses you, just think how his poor parents feel.

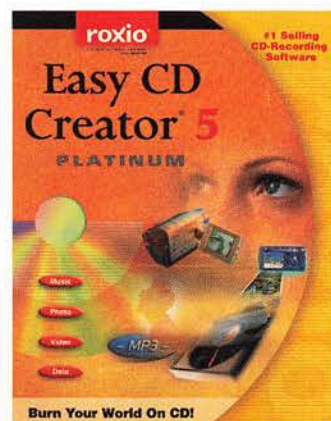
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➤ **Eminem shines
in a lead role**

THE GOOD!

Marshall Lore

Eminem charges onscreen, replaying his life in the bad old days. By Ted Lambert

8 MILE

DIRECTED BY Curtis Hanson

STARRING Eminem, Mekhi Phifer, Brittany Murphy, Kim Basinger

➤➤ THERE'S NOTHING NEW about bad-boy pop stars turning into bad-boy movie heroes. Take Ice Cube (*Boyz n the Hood*) or Prince (*Purple Rain*) or even Elvis (*Jailhouse Rock*). Now Eminem joins their ranks with *8 Mile*, a semiautobiographical look at his hard-knock life growing up in grimmest Detroit. And he shines in a lead role he rarely plays these days: a boy who's low on swagger and high on humility.

Eminem brings something new to Hollywood's rags-to-the-verge-of-riches formula: pain. Real pain. As in, no money, shitty job, lying girlfriends, friends he can't possibly trust and a trashy mom who sluts around with a guy he knew back when he was in high school. That's some capital-P Pain right there, and Eminem is an open wound.

The real Marshall Mathers is Jimmy (a.k.a. Rabbit), who, like many kids in crumbling 1995 Motown, has dreams of hip-hop fame. His crew

of wannabes holds his rapping in high esteem, but when he gets his break on the mic at an underground club, he freezes and suffers a crushing defeat — and spends the rest of the story attempting to climb back up on that horse.

Curtis Hanson, the Oscar-nominated director of *L.A. Confidential* and *Wonder Boys*, assembles a strong cast around his lead: Mekhi Phifer is Jimmy's loyal friend who never doubts his dawg's talent, and Brittany Murphy is Jimmy's playfully naughty friend whom he lusts after. Then there's Kim Basinger as Rabbit's ho-bag mom, who gripes to her own son about her sexual problems.

Of course, there's never any guarantee that pop stars can handle their own stories when they take them to the big screen. (See Mariah . . . or don't.) But Eminem does justice to his own fable. Rabbit endures endless hardships before he literally gets his act together with the humor, attitude and anger that help propel his rhymes past bravado and into public commentary. Fans already know how his story will turn out, but his pain is worth watching.



Sunday worship at Our Lady of the Used Tires

MOMS GONE MAD!

The scariest mothers in the movies

FAMOUS! MOMMIE DEAREST

Joan Crawford beats her daughter with wire hangers.

RELIGIOUS!

CARRIE Bible-thumping nut job punishes her telekinetic offspring once too often.

INCESTUOUS!

SPANKING THE MONKEY Summer vacation is boring unless your mom seduces you.

IMPERVIOUS! THROW MOMMA FROM THE TRAIN

She's a nasty old lady. And she's indestructible, too.

CARNIVOROUS!

PARENTS Mom and Pop barbecue their neighbors.

CADAVEROUS!

PSYCHO Inspires motelier Norman Bates to slash his guests in the shower.

MURDEROUS!

SERIAL MOM So she's a homicidal maniac! At least she keeps her home tidy.



Kathleen Turner just can't take a joke.

Photo: Fantasia (Serial Mom)



THE BAD!

FEMME FATALE

DIRECTED BY Brian De Palma

STARRING Rebecca Romijn-Stamos, Antonio Banderas, Peter Coyote

THIS MOVIE DOESN'T make a lick of sense. But Brian De Palma doesn't care: He's got the alarmingly seductive Romijn-Stamos to distract the audience with *hot lesbo action!* The rest is a ridiculous story about a Cannes jewel thief who double-crosses her partners and, seven years later, returns to Paris, where she lures a photographer (Banderas) into a kidnapping/blackmail scheme even she can't fully explain. Still, there's that *hot lesbo action!* Which may please any guys who aren't too busy rolling their eyes at the absurd script and embarrassing acting.



& THE INDIE!

FAR FROM HEAVEN

DIRECTED BY Todd Haynes

STARRING Julianne Moore, Dennis Quaid, Dennis Haysbert, Patricia Clarkson

IT'S 1957 CONNECTICUT, and Cathy and Frank Whitaker (Moore and Quaid) have it all: house, kids, status and a sexual secret that's about to destroy everything they've built. Cathy finds comfort in her friendship with a local landscaper (Haysbert), who's — *gasp!* — black. Haynes, who directed *Safe* and *Velvet Goldmine*, tackles sexuality and race with restrained intensity, especially in the form of this breathtaking, souped-up replica of a 1950s Technicolor Hollywood melodrama — an homage that at first seems tongue-in-cheek but sneaks up to deliver an emotional wallop.

Blender Approved

The pick of recent movies



AUTO FOCUS

An excellent, thoroughly creepy bio of Bob Crane, star of *Hogan's Heroes* and depraved sex addict.



MOONLIGHT MILE

Jake Gyllenhaal, Dustin Hoffman and Susan Sarandon offer a powerful tearjerker with a great '70s soundtrack.

AND THE REST ...

DIE ANOTHER DAY

DIRECTED BY Lee Tamahori

STARRING Pierce Brosnan, Halle Berry, Toby Stephens, Michael Madsen, John Cleese
THE PITCH 007 gets aid from yet another fabulous babe (and Oscar winner) to foil yet another rich villain's plans to rule the world. Recently British singer Madonna handles theme song and cameo duties.

THE VERDICT The twentieth Bond flick, with cool car chases shot on Icelandic glaciers, still has a license to kill at the box office.

THE RING

DIRECTED BY Gore Verbinski

STARRING Naomi Watts, Martin Henderson, Chris Cooper, Brian Cox

THE PITCH A reporter (Watts) goes hunting for a videotape with a very severe rental policy: Viewers die a week after they've watched it.

THE VERDICT English-language remake of 1998 Japanese cult flick *Ringu*. Abstract *Blair Witch*-esque mystery is haunting for horror fans in search of a good mind-fuck.

TALK TO HER

DIRECTED BY Pedro Almodóvar

STARRING Javier Cámara, Darío Grandinetti, Leonor Watling, Rosario Flores

THE PITCH A male nurse falls in love with the beautiful coma patient under his care, and he befriends a reporter whose matador girlfriend is also unconscious.

THE VERDICT The flamboyant Spanish maestro presents a darkly comic drama with an uplifting message: Love conquers all — even when you're conked out.

THE WEIGHT OF WATER

DIRECTED BY Kathryn Bigelow

STARRING Sean Penn, Sarah Polley, Catherine McCormack, Elizabeth Hurley

THE PITCH Two stories, two centuries, one island. Penn's a sad modern-day poet vacationing aboard a sailboat near New Hampshire; Polley is the sole witness to a notorious double murder 130 years earlier.

THE VERDICT Two loosely related tales about matrimony, sex and jealousy. Sadly, these two good parts share an uneasy marriage.

FRIDA

DIRECTED BY Julie Taymor

STARRING Salma Hayek, Alfred Molina, Antonio Banderas, Ashley Judd

THE PITCH The passionate, painful lives of socialist Mexican painter Frida Kahlo (Hayek) and her hedonistic artist husband, Diego Rivera (Molina).

THE VERDICT Despite earnest performances, stage director Taymor's lush collage, including puppets and animation, never becomes greater than its parts.

SWEPT AWAY

DIRECTED BY Guy Ritchie

STARRING Madonna, Adriano Giannini, Jeanne Tripplehorn

THE PITCH A pale update of a classic 1974 Italian film about a torrid affair between a rich bitch and a poor sailor trapped on a desert isle.

THE VERDICT The original, starring Adriano Giannini's dad, Giancarlo, was a sexy, taboo political statement. The update? Ritchie's vanity project for the wife. Set it adrift.

DON'T MISS

DON'T RUSH

DON'T BOTHER

LAST GOOD MOVIE YOU SAW?



ICE-T
West Coast gangsta rap's elder statesman

"I liked *Road to Perdition*. Tom Hanks ain't really no hardcore actor, as far as that type of role, but he pulled it off."



"Listen here, you git, I'm your real dad! And your mum, Divine, works in L.A."

Dad Influence

Hugh Grant discovers his inner swine.
By Clark Collis

ABOUT A BOY

DIRECTED BY
Chris Weitz, Paul Weitz

STARRING
Hugh Grant, Toni Colette,
Rachel Weisz, Nicholas Hoult

UNIVERSAL HOME VIDEO

★★★★

➤➤ AFTER HIS break-through in 1994's *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, Hugh Grant discovered he had a problem. He was landing role after role, but each one required him to reprise *Funeral*'s foppish English gent. The result: *Nine Months*, *Mickey Blue Eyes* and *Extreme Measures*.

Of course, Grant's problem wasn't just the crappiness of these films, but also the fact that there was something decidedly... *ungentlemanly* about him. That evil glint flashing from beneath his irritating mop would have been unsettling even without our knowing that Grant was on speaking (or certainly blowing) terms with at least one L.A. hooker.

Mercifully, Grant has finally started doing the (in)decent thing: first, with his shag-'em-and-shove-'em book publisher in 2001's *Bridget Jones's Diary*, and now in *About a Boy*, a terrific adaptation of Nick Hornby's novel. In *Boy*, Grant's dastardly Will is a vapid single London guy, an "island of

one" who preys on sexually frustrated single mums. Sadly for the aging (but still hip, or at least wannabe-hip) Will, he soon finds himself shackled to Marcus (Nicholas Hoult), the son of a suicidal hippie, Fiona (Toni Colette), and the uncoolest, most hopeless 12-year-old geek ever to mope the earth.

What follows is "character growth" and a happy ending (which, for assorted reasons, is fabulously embarrassing). But there's also a good hour of Grant behaving like an utterly selfish bastard in a way that's never less than convincing or hilarious. Prime moment: Grant telling dear friends why he shouldn't be their baby daughter's godfather — "I'd forget all her birthdays until she was 18. Then I'd take her out and get her drunk. And quite possibly try to sleep with her."

The DVD includes a "sing-along karaoke-style" version of "Killing Me Softly." After you've watched Marcus take a whack at it, you'll see he could really use your help.

There was always something *ungentlemanly* about Hugh Grant.

168 BLENDER



The Long Goodbye: Elliott Gould encounters L.A.'s fashion police.

JASON X

NEW LINE HOME ENTERTAINMENT

★★

With luck, the much-discussed (and now apparently green-lit) *Jason vs. Freddy* movie will prove better than this outer-space farrago that finds the *Friday the 13th* psycho awakened from a cryogenic nap hundreds of years in the future. Unfortunately, Jason's lengthy snooze doesn't seem to have improved his temper significantly, and soon the teen cast is being slaughtered like so many terrible actors hoping they'll never have to appear in one of these movies ever again. But hey — it's got an audio commentary!

THE LONG GOODBYE

MGM/UA HOME VIDEO

★★★★★

Elliott Gould wasn't always just that guy who plays Monica's dad on *Friends*. In 1973, believe it or not, he was pretty much the coolest actor in the world,

thanks to his iconoclastic performance in Robert Altman's Raymond Chandler update. Actually, "update" doesn't quite capture a film whose entire first act consists of Gould, playing private eye Philip Marlowe as a mumbling smart-ass hipster (catchphrase: "It's OK with me"), trying to dupe his cat into eating off-brand canned food.

NEAR DARK SPECIAL EDITION

ANCHOR BAY HOME ENTERTAINMENT

★★★★

"What do you people want?" "Just a few minutes of your time — about the same duration as the rest of your life." This stylish Midwestern vampire flick is director Kathryn Bigelow's finest effort, and it certainly features Bill Paxton's best 10 minutes in film as he turns a redneck bar into an abattoir. ("Finger-lickin' good!") The DVD includes deleted scenes and commentary from Bigelow, who also directed *K-11*.

Blender Approved

The pick of recent DVDs



DOGTOWN AND Z-BOYS

COLUMBIA TRISTAR HOME VIDEO

A brilliant and sometimes poignant documentary on how Santa Monica's fearless, flawless teenage skateboard pioneers built a new culture.



SCRATCH

PALM PICTURES

The ulti- (wikki-wikki) ultimate doc about the hip-hop vinyl itch and the DJs who scratch it, from Grand Wizard Theodore to DJ Shadow.

ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST SPECIAL EDITION

WARNER HOME VIDEO

★★★★★

Jack Nicholson deserved his first Oscar for his volcanic performance ("I must be crazy to be in a loony bin like this!") as Randle McMurphy, an asylum patient who takes on Louise Fletcher's lobotomizing queen bitch and wins. Sort of. One of the best films ever made about America (by Czech director Milos Forman). The DVD features eight deleted scenes.

PANIC ROOM

COLUMBIA TRISTAR HOME VIDEO

★★★★

When single mom Jodie Foster moves into a new Manhattan townhouse with a supposedly impenetrable "panic room," you just know she'll be spending her first (and only) night inside it. What follows in David Fincher's darkly comic thriller, an urban reworking of *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, is great stuff, with bickering bad guys Forrest Whitaker, the surprisingly excellent Jared Leto and the even more surprisingly excellent Dwight Yoakam trying to steal the loot stashed in the you-know-what.

THE SCORPION KING

UNIVERSAL HOME VIDEO

★★★

A spin-off of the *Mummy* franchise that's actually a throwback to those old-school swords-and-sandals epics, when the actors' chests were even bigger than the actresses'. Mercifully, if the Rock's acting talents are considerably subtler than his pecs, the wrestler's still an amenable presence, and director Chuck Russell ensures that the genre's other vital components — whiny sidekick, comical camel and so on — work correctly.

THE SUM OF ALL FEARS

PARAMOUNT HOME ENTERTAINMENT

★★

A few things *The Sum of All Fears* would have us believe: 1. that frat boy Ben Affleck, as



Y Tu Mamá También: car trouble

Tom Clancy's CIA spook Jack Ryan, not only knows where Ukraine is but speaks its language fluently; 2. that a bunch of Euro-Nazis might try to engineer a war between Russia and America, a conflict that would immediately roast Europe; 3. that watching an American city getting destroyed by a nuclear explosion in any way constitutes "entertainment" these days; 4. that it's not complete crap.

TRUE ROMANCE SPECIAL EDITION

WARNER HOME VIDEO

★★★★

Quentin Tarantino's tale of two lovers (Patricia Arquette and Christian Slater) who accidentally steal a suitcase full of drug money was box-office poison. Probably because its off-puttingly Hallmark-esque title should have been *This Movie Is About Guns, Sex, Dennis Hopper and Christopher Walken Outcooling Each Other, Gary Oldman Playing a Stoned Rasta, Cocaine and Guns*. Includes an alternate ending, 30 minutes of deleted scenes and three commentaries.

Y TU MAMÁ TAMBIÉN (AND YOUR MOTHER TOO)

MG/MUA HOME VIDEO

★★★★

When two sex-crazed Mexican teens persuade an older woman to go on a road trip, it looks like *Y Tu Mamá* is careening into ménage à trois territory — and so, in a sense, it does. But what's with that ominous voice-over? And why does... ah, but to say more would spoil a movie as tricky as it is sexy as it is atmospheric as it is brilliant. The DVD comes in R- and unrated (i.e., squelchy and squelchier) versions.

MUSIC DVDS BY ROB KEMP



STEPPING RED RAZOR X

MVD

★★★★

Peter Tosh was often described as the Wailers' Malcolm X to Bob Marley's Martin Luther King Jr. Tosh was reggae's most militant voice, inveighing ceaselessly against what he liked to call the white man's "shitstem." (He also referred to Manhattan as "Boo York Shitty.") This terrific 1992 documentary juxtaposes vintage performance and interview footage with artful shots of late-'80s Jamaica. Friends and family attest to Tosh's likes (marijuana, Jah), dislikes (white people) and an uncompromising nature that persisted until he was shot to death by burglars in his home in 1987.



IRON MAIDEN: ROCK IN RIO

SONY MUSIC VIDEO

★★★★

The masters of D&D metal (and Eddie, their giant rotting-corpse mascot) rock a typically over-the-top 2001 gig at Brazil's Rock in Rio festival, in front of an audience of 250,000. Deliciously silly footage shows the Maiden at rest — golfing and, in the case of singer Bruce Dickinson, fencing.



MOTÖRHEAD 25 & ALIVE: "BONESHAKER"

STEAMHAMMER/SPV

★★★

An October 2000 show by Lemmy Kilmister and friends celebrates their crushingly loud legacy. Queen's Brian May and original Motörhead guitarist Fast Eddie Clarke murder "Overkill," the band's first great song.



JOHN & YOKO'S YEAR OF PEACE

CBC

★★

In 1969, John Lennon and Yoko Ono decided to contribute to world peace by lying around in bed in a Montreal hotel room. This serviceable doc includes a recent Ono interview and archive footage, including a spirited confrontation with right-wing "Lil' Abner" cartoonist Al Capp.



BUTTHOLE SURFERS BLIND EYE SEES ALL: LIVE 1985

MVD

★★★★

This amalgam of two 1985 Detroit gigs shows the Texas-fried psychedelic punkers at their most demented. Includes a karaoke sing-along with the bra-clad Gibby Haynes & Co: "I smoke Elvis Presley's toenails/When I want to get high."



SILVERCHAIR ACROSS THE NIGHT: THE MAKING OF DIORAMA

RHINO HOME VIDEO

★★

Only die-hard fans of the Australian bubble-grunge trio will brave this unremarkable chronicle of their latest album's creation and frontman Daniel Johns discussing his fight with depression.

A close-up photograph of Ice Cube wearing a black military helmet and a camouflage jacket. He has a determined, slightly aggressive expression, showing his teeth as he uses a small, black, handheld dental flossing device on his upper teeth. The background is a solid, dark red color.

An explosive look at the history of racism in pop culture. By Neal Pollack



REGANBOOKS, \$23

★★★★

David Bowie called Adolf Hitler “a tremendous morale booster.”

The editors of *Ego Trip* do. In 13 issues from 1994 to '98, the hip-hop-obsessed *Ego Trip* was one of America's sharpest zines. The *Big Book of Racism* is a hilarious stoner's paradise of their best short articles, photo collages and high-concept gags. The editors pit the Beatles' "White Album" against Prince's Black Album (the Fab Four win by a nose) and coolly reduce punk priestess Patti Smith to just another bigot simply by quoting her lyrics — "Jimi Hendrix was a nigger/Jesus Christ and Grandma, too" — in "N-Word Up! Rock Songs By Whites That Employ 'Niggers'."

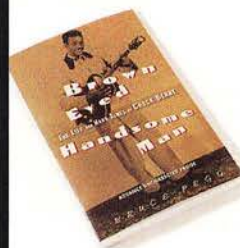
"This book in no way endorses a belief in racism," notes *Racism's* reassuring epigraph. "We just hate everybody." According to *Ego Trip*, everybody hates everybody. "The most snooty, cocksure, anal people" was Kurt Cobain's take on . . . the English. Celebrate the hate!



By Ashley Kahn

★★★★ VIKING, \$26

BEN BRANDT



By Bruce Pegg

★ ★ ROUTLEDGE, \$30

Chuck Berry should have had a phenomenal career. The original rock & roll storyteller duck-walked out of 1950s St. Louis with joyous hits like "Maybellene" and "Roll Over Beethoven," his raucous guitar

MITCH MYERS

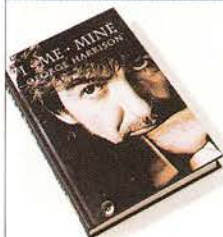


THE YEAR'S FINEST WRITING
ON ROCK, POP, JAZZ,
COUNTRY, & MORE

Edited by Jonathan Lethem

★★★★ DA CAPO PRESS, \$14

JONAH WEINER



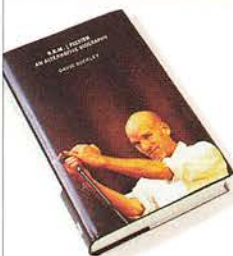
I ME MINE

By George Harrison

☆☆☆ CHRONICLE BOOKS, \$25

England's Genesis Publications published *I Me Mine* in 1980 in a signed, leather-bound \$350 limited edition. Its more affordable update, with a new intro by Harrison's widow, Olivia, takes on a melancholy feel. Half interviews and notes by Harrison's old mate Derek Taylor, and half scribbled lyrics (Harrison nearly ended "Something": "You know what I'm telling to you/That woman don't make me blue"), *I Me Mine* reads as a fading snapshot of a laid-back man who cared more for car racing than music. Indeed, John Lennon was so hurt by his near absence here that he never returned Harrison's last call.

DAVID QUANTICK



R.E.M.

FICTION: AN ALTERNATIVE BIOGRAPHY

By David Buckley

☆☆☆ VIRGIN BOOKS, \$30

Fuck-ups make great stories — just look at Mötley Crüe. R.E.M. are not a bunch of fuck-ups, but British music writer David Buckley analyzes what little has gone wrong with R.E.M.'s career through candid interviews with guitarist Peter Buck and bassist Mike Mills. (Apparently, singer Michael Stipe wasn't available.) R.E.M. played for more than a decade before their mid-'90s meltdown, when drummer Bill Berry quit and manager Jefferson Holt got canned (a mystery the author addresses but doesn't settle). But Buckley

undermines his compelling stories with shoddy musical analysis: He states that "Losing My Religion" has "no chorus" (it does) and "modulates between major and minor chords" (it doesn't).

ROB KEMP



ROLLING WITH THE STONES

By Bill Wyman

☆☆☆ DK PUBLISHING, \$50

If ex-Rolling Stones bassist Bill Wyman had been at the Last Supper, he would have griped at getting stuck with the check. In his illustrated Stones history, Wyman's prose is so boring and petulant, he makes his day job with the World's Greatest Rock & Roll Band sound like a gig at the post office. "We went onstage at 4:30 p.m. and played our usual set to 77,000 fans," reads a typically dreary diary entry. "I wore my steel blue Nike suit." Still, the sheer quantity of photographs and memorabilia is impressive, and the odd interesting tidbit manages to surface: The late pianist Ian Stewart refused to play minor chords and, when one came along, he would lift his hands in protest.

CLARK COLLIS



SERGE GAINSBOURG A FISTFUL OF GITANES

By Sylvie Simmons

☆☆☆ DA CAPO PRESS, \$16.50

A chain-smoking, sex-obsessed bon vivant, Serge Gainsbourg was as close as France ever got to its own rock star. He once had sex on a pile of Picassos at Salvador Dali's apartment, and though he couldn't drive, he bought a Rolls-Royce Silver Spirit to use as a glorified ashtray for his three to five packs a day. And Brigitte Bardot's vocals on his biggest hit, "Je T'aime, Moi Non Plus," suggest their collaboration wasn't just professional. Too bad Sylvie Simmons's meandering bio glosses over the dirtier details, relying on disciples like Beck and Momus to discuss a musical career that leaped on every musical bandwagon, from yé-yé to reggae to rap, before his 1991 death at 62. *Gitanes* is largely an abstract painting of French pop's great *enfant terrible*.

SAM JEMIELITY



Serge survived the evening without being thrown off the TV show.

The Best Part Of a Big Book!

In 1985, Serge Gainsbourg enrages Whitney Houston by telling her — on live TV! — he wants to screw her. . . .

THE DIVA, following the fluff format of these shows, sang her song then sat down next to Serge, beatifically smiling, ready to indulge in the standard chat. . . . Whitney spoke in English, the other guests in French, while the beaming host Michel Drucker lobbed translations back and forth like a manic tennis pro. Serge, looking like something poured out of a Tom Waits whisky bottle and bristling at Drucker's deliberate bland mistranslations of his various mutterings, suddenly interjected, in plain English, "I said I want to fuck her."

"WHAT DID HE SAY?" screamed Whitney. The pale-faced presenter tried to smooth things over, offering more fake translations in English, assuring La Whitney that what Serge had really said was he found her "great" and "very pretty." To clear up the confusion, Serge repeated his statement in French, "J'ai dit que j'ai envie de la baiser."

Drucker, a strained rictus stretched across his face, suggested to his mother that she might want to switch channels. Since it was live TV and the damage had already been done . . . Serge survived the evening without being thrown off the show.



From Serge Gainsbourg: A Fistful of Gitanes. Copyright © 2002 by Sylvie Simmons. Reprinted by arrangement with Da Capo Press, a member of the Perseus Books Group.

Blender Approved

The pick of recent books



THE DARK STUFF

By Nick Kent

DA CAPO PRESS

Three decades of beautiful, scary journalism from a sharply precise, insightful fly on the piss-stained wall of rock & roll.



HIP HOP IMMORTALS

IMMORTAL BRANDS/

SOCK BANDIT PRODUCTIONS

An oversize volume of vibrant hip-hop portraits from every photographer imaginable. Almost begs you to enjoy it with a spliff.



Sticky Fingers

The world's top-selling game now lets actual players do nasty stuff online! By Alex Porter

THE SIMS ONLINE

EA GAMES — PC, MACINTOSH

★★★★★

JUMPIN' JOYSTICKS!

Four games with more cybersex than you can handle, big boy

DOA EXTREME BEACH VOLLEYBALL

Think Barbie's Malibu Beach House, with advanced "jiggle physics."

VIRTUAL RESORT: SPRING BREAK

Manage an island getaway full of college kids drinkin', fightin' and bonin'. Dude!

DAVE MIRRA BMX XXX

Win money in BMX races. Then blow it at Scores, a "gentlemen's club."

FEAR EFFECT 2: RETRO HELIX

In the future: hot lesbian contract killers with high-tech weaponry. Yow!

➤➤ HOW COME there are so many video games that let players blast drug dealers to bits or run around mazes collecting magic bracelets, yet so few that let players meet, mate, frolic and do unspeakable things in rowdy backyard parties, gay bathhouses and corporate backrooms?

Good question. And The Sims Online is a great answer. It's The Sims, with extra id: a virtual world shaped by twisted imaginations — and this time, players not only shape their characters' faces, bodies and tempers, and then build homes and businesses for them. They also interact in public, with characters managed by other players.

With actual pervers chuckling at their keyboards, play can get dirty pretty quick. Of course, just because the online universe is a public place doesn't mean The Sims Online automatically succumbs to the

basest instincts. But it does increase the likelihood of living with a stoner Sim roommate, a manic-depressive Sim spouse, or a cross-dressing Sim grandpa.

The Sims is the world's top-selling game, and it's a riot, with or without elderly transvestites. It's fun to privately manage families of tiny humans who can piss on the floor, set their houses on fire and even die. But because the new version plays all actions in public, your laid-back next-door neighbor may actually possess the dirty mind and filthy habits of a college student from Florida.

Best of all, the players create everything here, limited only by imagination and budget. (On top of the software, players pay \$10 to \$15 a month to subscribe.) But The Sims Online combines the geeky with the freaky — it's a bit D&D, a bit S&M — and the amazing result is truly priceless.



NO ONE LIVES FOREVER 2: A SPY IN H.A.R.M.'S WAY

SIERRA — PC

Brit babe Cate Archer returns in a game fusing *Get Smart* and *Austin Powers* into a first-person shooter. Kill discreetly with silenced pistols, snap away with a lipstick spy-cam — even slip up your nemeses with a strategically placed banana. All with your British reserve, and without chipping your nail polish. ★★★★★



SUPER MONKEY BALL 2

SEGA — GAMECUBE

The evil Bad Boon's been robbing bananas from your idyllic monkey village. You're a chimp, and you're pissed. So you climb into a transparent globe and roll through dizzying mazelike courses to find the bananas (and play minigames of golf and bowling). It's cute but creepy: *Teletubbies* meets *Planet of the Apes*. ★★★★★



CONFLICT: DESERT STORM

TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE — XBOX, PS2, GAMECUBE, PC

This shooting/strategy game lets you command British S.A.S. or U.S. Delta Force troops on desert missions. You control four guys with combat specialties like sniper shooting and throat slitting. The final mission: Take out Saddam, without having to go through Congress. (Propaganda? Naaaaah.) ★★★★★



BLINX: THE TIME SWEEPER

MICROSOFT — XBOX

It sounds like standard kitty — er, kiddie — fare: You're a cartoon cat sucking up objects with a powerful vacuum. But Blinx requires you to rewind, fast-forward and record your moves, fiddling with the feline like he's a TiVo box. A cool fourth-dimension game. Now if only we could train a pet to vacuum after himself. ★★★★★

Blender Approved

The pick of recent games



SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE

NINTENDO — GAMECUBE

Take Mario to a tropical isle full of piranha plants and toxic brown goop. (Good thing he's a plumber.)



JAMES BOND 007: NIGHTFIRE

EA GAMES — XBOX, PS2, GAMECUBE

Play Bond with Pierce Brosnan's pretty mug! Plus some nifty gadgets, like a submarine car with missiles.

ToeJam & Earl

MISSION TO EARTH



ONLY ON
XBOX

Big Earl

ToeJam

Latisha

Sells games

Third Leg

30 enormous, randomly generated levels to explore

Play solo or as a team with a dynamically splitting screen

Humor is your secret weapon against insane earthlings

Over 70 power-ups that unleash special attacks

STEP BACK Y'ALL

Earth: a planet in desperate need of Funkification. Your mission: explore sprawling environments, master the art of Funk-Fu fighting, collect gift-wrapped power-ups, defeat the dreaded Anti-Funk and generally get down with your bad self in an off the wall adventure unlike anything you've experienced before. Feel the funk, baby!

ToeJam & Earl
PRODUCTIONS, INC.

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XBOX

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▶▶ HEEEEE! It's a free XM Sky Fi Satellite Radio, transmitting 100 diverse channels including electronica, classic alternative, reggae, you name it. XM won't lose its signal, at home or on the road, and it doesn't even need installation — it plugs right in. Just solve this puzzle, read the official rules at blender.com, cut out your completed version and send it to Blender Puzzle Contest, 1040 Avenue of the Americas, 22nd floor, New York, New York 10018. Make sure we get your answer and contact information by November 12, 2002. We'll choose a winner at random from correct entries received, and post each XM Radio winner's name (and the solution to the previous puzzle) at blender.com/crossword. Score!



PENCIL ME IN!

Yo, it's *Blender's* crossword!

Starring 19 Down!

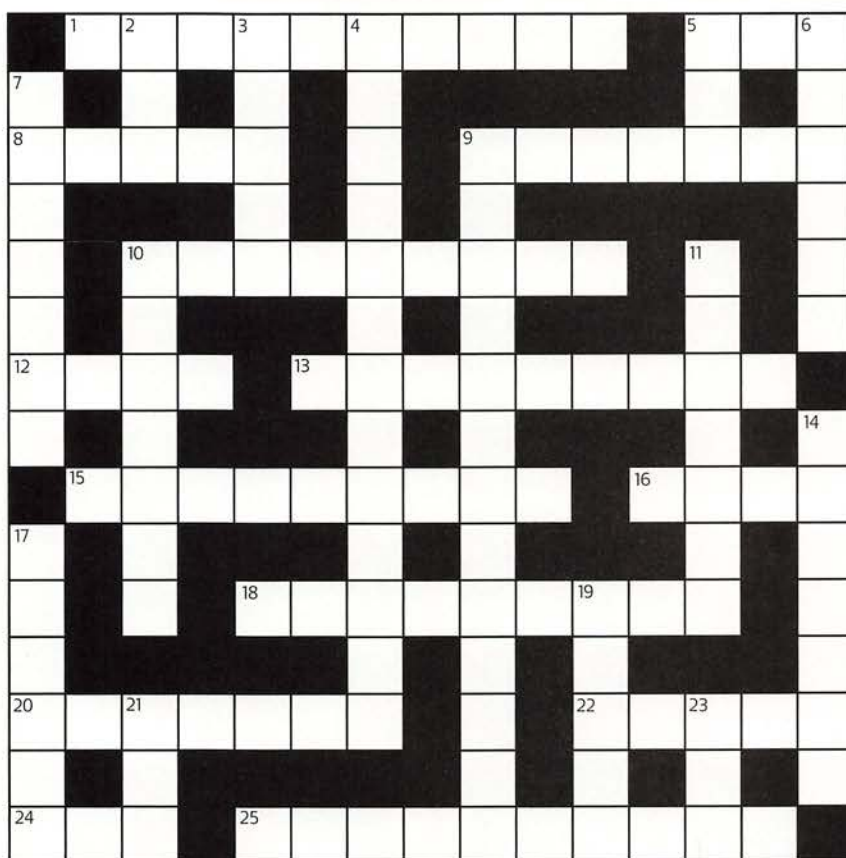
By Brendan Quigley

ACROSS

- 1 Grandparents of alterna-rock, defying their young name (two words)
- 5 Cyndi Lauper's '80s hit "She ____"
- 8 Boy band on VH1's *Making the Band* (two words)
- 9 Alex Chilton's huge, bright band (two words)
- 10 The Rolling Stones did the "Harlem Shuffle" on this 1986 album (two words)
- 12 Joan ____, who sang at Woodstock
- 13 Half of Tenacious D (two words)
- 15 Jackson-McCartney duet from 1983 (three words)
- 16 1980s pop group ____ and the Mechanics
- 18 Ben E. King's classic about sticking together (three words)
- 20 Punk's Henry, or jazz's Sonny
- 22 Rappers do this on the mic
- 24 He's *Stillmatic*
- 25 Nelly's oddly spelled number 1 hit about drawer dropping (three words)

DOWN

- 2 John Lennon's adopted middle name
- 3 Stevie Wonder's ____ visions
- 4 Karen O. leads cheers for this new NYC punk band (three words)
- 5 Meatloaf's ____ *Out of Hell*
- 6 Dollywood is her island in the stream
- 7 Once, they dwelled in the tragic kingdom (two words)
- 9 Country & western duo Kix and Ronnie (three words)
- 10 Shock jocks and platter spinners
- 11 Eric Clapton: "She don't lie, she don't lie, she don't lie..."
- 14 The Vines' "breakout" single
- 17 Jay-Z protégé with the pop-rap hit "Oh Boy"
- 19 Radiohead's lead moaner-mumbler
- 21 Guitarist Paul, or bassist Claypool
- 23 The Beatles' ____ Blues"



OFFICE JAMZ! By David Rees





Dude! What a *craazy* character 22-year-old Backstreet Boy Nick Carter is. If he's not UFO hunting in the middle of the night, he's going scuba diving or getting yet another tattoo. Perhaps he can answer the question...

BY ROB TANNENBAUM
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHAPMAN BAEHLER

WHO DOES NICK CARTER THINK HE IS?

That doesn't look like a self-portrait you're holding, Nick.

I've been drawing since I was little, and it's usually more serious. But I wanted something silly and stupid, a little abnormal. That's how I think of myself: silly, stupid and abnormal.

So why did you draw an alien? I believe aliens are real. I used to go hunting for them, three or four years ago. I'd get back late from a tour and couldn't go to sleep. I'd go out in my car with friends late at night in the middle of Florida and look for UFOs.

What's a trait of yours that people find annoying?

Probably that I'm scattered. It's like I've got attention-deficit disorder. I get very flustered, and it's hard to get my attention. But when I'm doing music, everything falls into place. It's like only music can help me concentrate.

If you were to wake up dead tomorrow, who would be the leading suspect?

I don't know. That's hardcore, bro!

You're thinking of someone. Who?

Justin Timberlake. [Laughs] I'm just joking. I don't even know him.

If you were a woman, who would you want to be?

Janis Joplin. I'm a big rock fan, and you can tell she had a lot of stuff that she held inside. She could release it only when she sang. That's how I feel. I hold a lot of things inside, and the only time I get to release them is when I open my mouth.

What do you have in your wallet right now?

Some credit cards. Some chicks' numbers. A scuba diver's license. And receipts — I save all my receipts, because my dad told me to. If the IRS comes at me, I'm going to have a shitload of receipts.

How many tattoos do you have?

I stopped counting after 15. Japanese symbols, a shark... I got chaos down my spine, because I was a chaotic kid. Reckless, annoying.

Imagine that you're shopping at the grocery store. How much is a quart of milk?

I don't know. Shit. I failed science. How much is it? Eight ounces or something?

No — how much does a quart of milk cost?

I don't know. A guess would be \$2. Or \$5.99. You want me to guess again? Or did I miss?

You obviously haven't bought groceries in a while. What's your favorite swear word?

Damn. No, probably *shit*. Because *shit* happens. [Laughs] That was pretty fucking lame.

So maybe it's *fucking*. Damn it! You caught me.

How would you describe your taste in sex?

Dude, I don't know. Picky?

You've never taken advantage of who you are to have sex?

Mmm, can't say that.

So who does Nick Carter think he is?

A margarita. I'm sweet and sour at the same time. But when you drink me, I make you feel good. [BLENDER]

My taste in sex?
Dude, I don't know. Picky?

ON CARTER: JOGGING SUIT BY
AKADEMIKS; ON MODELS:
LEFT) SWIMSUIT BY MISS SIXTY;
SUNGASSES BY A. TESTONI;
SUNGASSES BY CHRISTIAN
DIOR; (RIGHT) SWIMSUIT
AND HOT SHORTS BY MISS
SIXTY; HELD AVAILABLE
AT DAYVOLA; HAT AVAILABLE
AT AMERICAN RAG; SUNGLASSES
BY CHRISTIAN DIOR

Specialist **Scott Dignan** Military Police. **AN ARMY OF ONE.** U.S. Army Reserve.

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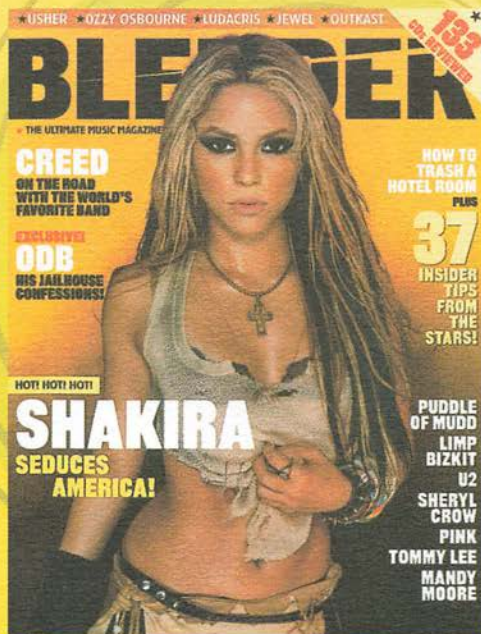
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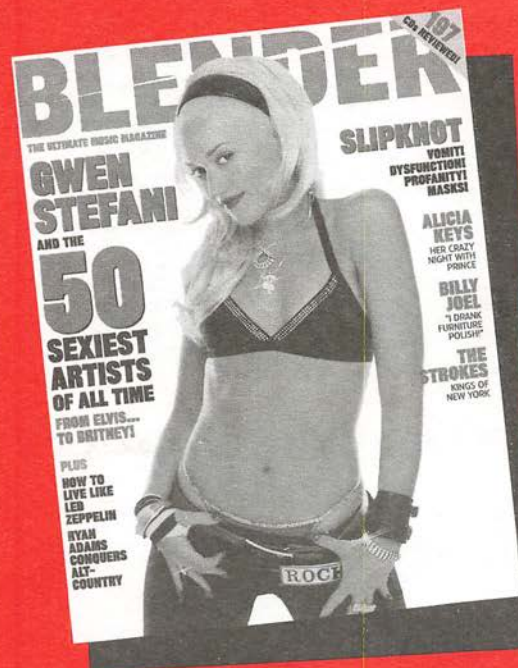
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